

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE and ACTIONS
OF
Charles Osborn, Esq;

Natural Son to the E—l of A—e.

CONTAINING

An Account of his polite Education; his Loss of a vast Estate left him by his Father; his Distress, till relieved by an unknown Lady, by whom he had seven Children before he ever saw her; his Extravagancies; his eight several Marriages; his Intrigues; his turning Priest; with the vast Fluctuation of his Fortune, till resolving to live soberly, he not only married the unknown Lady, but became possessed of the great Estate he had lost; and made Restitution.

Written by himself in the decline of life.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

IT is not for that the world can want amusement (amidst the variety of lives, novels, and entertaining romances daily springing from the press) which occasions my producing to light these genuine memoirs of Mr. Osborn; but for that I have often wondered, why authors, who spin from the product of their own brain, without the least foundation in nature to ground their story upon, should not aim at rectifying the morals of mankind, as well as at cap-

tivating their fancies; for where the field is open, and unconfined to real facts, in my opinion, that ought to have its share in the production; as surely it is less ingenuous to entertain the mind by an exhibition of riotous, and iniquitous exploits only, which at best cause but a surprising sensation; than by drawing proper conclusions from their premises, not only to delight, but at the same time instruct, and illuminate the reader's understanding, by making matters of pleasure, the vehicle of those useful impressions, which without such a conveyance, might never have been remarked by them; though at the same time, they are only such as ought naturally to result from a considerate reflection on the thing premised.

If to illustrate vice be ever commendable, it is then only, when it

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is attempted, to be condemned, by demonstrating its evil tendency; for then, it may be of service to youthful minds, fraught with the reigning passions of the age; and its force must be still the greater, when delivered by him, whose course of life, (for the most part) consisted in one continued scene of iniquity, and self-condemnation. This is the grand motive for publishing these memoirs, in the very sentiments of the guilty party himself.

I appeal to all those who have made the gratification of their ruling passion the sole object of all their actions, (without reflection on consequences) whether they ever, by that means, procured a settled tranquillity to their own minds; and believe I may answer for them, that they have not: nay, I have brought them a specimen in Mr. Osborn, of what a

tumultuous confusion of thought they must be endued with, who make not right reason, and moral honesty the sole conductress of all their operations.

The great folly of youth is inconsiderateness; and whilst a fund to supply their extravagancies, and debauches, is but attainable, by any, though ever so vile practices; the enjoyment, (as they call it) being present, how do they applaud those destructive schemes by which they obtain it; till experience, too late, introduces such self-condemning horrors on their conscience, as are no ways to be dispelled, but by the acutest anguish and despair; and then their bodies either become victims to the abused world; or they fall through the abandoned rashness of their own hands, unable to sustain their being, under

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the pressure of those pangs which overbear them.

It is true, Mr. Osborn's course of life, (vile as it undoubtedly was, for the most part,) was not wholly void of such former virtuous impressions as his mother had implanted in his youthful breast; but though they appear not to have been totally eradicated, through his whole course; it is very plain, that they lay under a more than partial suppression for many years, till consideration gaining the ascendant, gave them new action, and vigour: But this, neither is, nor can be every man's case; nor is any one justifiable in plunging into vice, under a prospect of immersing again; for where this accidentally happens to be the case of one, ten thousand perish in the experiment.

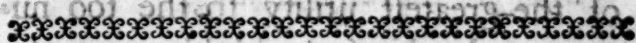
I have only to add, that though Mr. Osborn did not intend this to be

published in his life-time; yet I am
 satisfied, it was no ways ungrateful
 to him, to apprehend it might be
 made that use of after his death; he
 having frequently lamented the want
 of known examples, which might be
 of the greatest utility to the too nu-
 merous herd of unthinking youths,
 in deterring them from shipwreck,
 on those rocks, whereon himself had
 unhappily split; for it was his com-
 mon saying, We see the gilded out-
 side of the vicious and adore it; but
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 loath it.





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ME-



MEMOIRS

OF

CHARLES OSBORN, Esq;

CHAP. I.

Gives an account of the author's birth, and education. His early genius. His disposition. Death of his natural father. Methods he used to procure his father's will Debates with his Lawyer. Loses hopes of a great estate.



It is not a greater misfortune to some men to be bred in a cottage, than to others to be brought up in a palace. The latter of these was my cursed fate; till having received what is generally esteemed a polite education, (for I had learnt several languages, could dance to perfection, ride, fence, and touch several In-

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instruments in a surprising manner) my company was courted by most of the beau-monde.

My father, the Earl of A—e, was so tender of me, though I owed my birth to his gardiner's daughter, (his own lady never having had a child) that from the instant of my coming into the world, I was treated as a person of quality; nor could I have had greater honours paid to me, had I been the legitimate heir to his whole estate, which was near thirty thousand pounds a year.

His extraordinary regard for my mother, had placed her in one of the best houses about St. James's, with the retinue and equipage of his real countess; nor did any expence attending her family, flow from him with a sparing hand; but his whole solicitude in life was, to make both her, and my self, happy. The prudence and oeconomy of my mother, rendered his disbursements on her account so inconsiderable, that I have often seen him in admiration, that they should amount no higher; and how it was possible for her to support the figure she did, upon the slender demands she made on him; and he would frequently be for making those additions, which my mother hath countermanded,
and

and declared she had no manner of occasion for.

As for my self, he made no secret of the relation I bore to him, nor was he ever better pleased, than when I was in his company; stiling me his heir upon all occasions, both public, and private.

My mother, who was infinitely fond of me, observing in my nature the seeds of a sprightly genius, and gaiety of disposition, more than she could have wished, even at the age of thirteen years; would fain have persuaded my father to have sent me to Eaton school; where, by my absence from him, and being under some suitable discipline, I might have regulated my passions, and settled my conduct, before I made too early an appearance in life, under my own guidance; for though I lived with her, yet she was but too sensible, that I was entering upon that state, which would soon demonstrate how ineffectual her influence would prove over me; but no remonstrances of hers, could prevail with the Earl, to withdraw me from under his own eye.

I had had a tutor in the house with me for some years, nor had his instructions been fruitless; for by the time I was fourteen years of age, I could have held an ar-

gument in the Latin (which was my favourite tongue) with far greater elegance of style, and propriety of diction, than in my native language. I was very ready in French, and had no inconsiderable smatch of the Greek idiom; nor is it to be imagined, (young as I was) that I could be wholly insensible of my own perfections; which, as my years increased, giving me the advantage in all companies, not only of my contemporaries, but even of my seniors, vehemently excited my emulation for superior talents.

My father, taking great delight in the compliments perpetually paid to my early genius and understanding, thought no encouragements too great for me; but supplied my expences with an unlimited allowance; kept me a chariot, a gentleman, and two footmen, for my own equipage; and I behaving as such, was admitted in my fifteenth year, into every manly entertainment on the same footing with my elders; nor indeed, was I a proper companion for any others.

Notwithstanding the liberties I was master of, my lust after praise, and the agreeable manner in which I was received into all conversations, on account of my merit, were such strong incentives to pursue my studies;

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studies; that, happen what would, I had allotted so many hours in the morning for that purpose, as I was at all events determined not to break in upon; and rest, was the only thing I ever postponed to them.

I never heard a word I was unacquainted with over night, but I made my self master of it in the morning; nor was any topic advanced in my hearing, for the first time, that I was not able to argue from, whenever it occurred a second; and my memory was so retentive, that whatever I had once read, or heard, was my own.

It may be thought a piece of self-conceit in me, by the reader, thus to amplify my own endowments; but as truth is absolutely necessary, where an offer of any character is made to the public; so in exaggerating my own deserts, I shall by no means cast a cloud over my own failings. I must confess, I had no small share of pride; for having so indulgent a parent, I put as great a value upon my self, for being his natural, as (and even more than) I ought to have done, had I been his legitimate issue. I was to a great degree ambitious, and had formed to my self vast expectations, of what, through his interest, and with the possession of his fortune, I should one day attain to. I took more delight in the exer-

cises of Bacchus, than was consistent with my years, and was extremely amorous, but too often inconstant.

I had several intrigues on my hands, among persons of the best rank; all which I managed with such dexterity, and address, that none of my enamourettas were ever in the least jealous of me, or suspicious of each other, though frequently of the same family; for my youth rendering me less suspected, I was inscrupulously admitted amongst the junior ladies; and indeed, who would have distrusted infidelity, at the age of fifteen. I seldom attacked, but I carried the fort.

Thus, whilst I was swimming in an ocean of delights, and transports, my father, being visited with a violent fever, which baffled every effort for relief, I had now before me another prospect, which almost merged my deluded senses, in the expectation of his vast estate; and I was ungratefully impatient till it became my own; for that he had made his will, and thereby given it to me, I was perfectly satisfied from his own shewing, at his country Seat at C——r——n.

In four days he grew delirious, and died upon the tenth; when my mother, who
was

was named his executrix, gave orders for his funeral, as he had before directed.

No sooner had we paid due honours to my father's remains, than my mother and I addressed ourselves to the Countess, assuring her of our knowledge of his will, and our belief that it remained in his study, at his seat at C——r——n, desiring her to go with us thither to inspect it. The Countess made but light of the matter, expecting very little benefit from it; and it not yet being her time of retiring into the country, she refused to go. We then desired her to favour us with the key of his study, and some others, that our selves might search for it; but she told us, that we having no relation to the family, she could not justify such an act; though she was ready to deliver them to his brother, who was his next of kin, and heir at law.

The sense I had of being his son, and the certainty of being the devisee of his estate, by the name of Charles Osborn Esquire, scarce permitted me to treat her with good manners upon this refusal; but yet I bridled my passion, and leaving her, my mother and I went to our lawyer in Lincoln's Inn, where we advised what steps to take, in order to be possessed of this will; for without it we could do nothing. He accompanied

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us to Doctors-Commons, where we entered a caveat, against the proving any will that might be brought, till we should discover the true one; then advising in what manner best to proceed for an inspection into his writings, one delay or other, took us up about six days.

We then, together with our lawyer, went to my Lord's brother's house, (now himself Earl of A——e) to require his presence at the inspection; but to our vast surprize, were informed, that he had been gone some days to his seat at C——r——n. His seat, said I? (for my choler arose at those words) and was proceeding, when my lawyer gave me an item to be silent, and we entered our coach again.

He then advised us to call on the Countess, to know whether Lord A——e had received the keys from her, before he went to C——r——n; she, upon information of who was below, refused us admittance to her; but sent us word, that having delivered the keys to his Lordship, she had no further concern in the affair.

We were thunderstruck at this news; and our lawyer, to complete our perturbation, gave us a detail of several cases, wherein wills had been secreted and suppressed; and after thousands spent in clearing up the fraud,

fraud, the miserable parties (being absolutely reduced) had been obliged to acquiesce under the misfortune. And, says he, can you imagine, that, if Lord A—e is now in possession of that will, which shall disinherit him, he will ever produce it against himself?

No! said I, I will have him sworn to the Devil, but I will find it out, or perjure him. True, said my lawyer, but that is all you can do. All? says I, all that I can do? Yes, says he, all. Why? says I, if he finds this will, can he swear there is none? That, says he, will be according as he is advised, before the search. Why? replied I, can a man be advised, whether he shall find a thing, which he sees, and takes in his hand, or not find it? Young gentleman, says he, these things are mysteries of a profession, and not to be lightly divulged; but thus much I may venture to say, that he who goes about such an act with deliberation, and cautiously weighing each step, and its consequences, before he stirs the foot, may be hunted for years in the courts of equity, before you can get a syllable from him, to the purpose of your enquiry. He must then, says I, necessarily forswear himself all the while. Not at all, not at all; says he. How? says I, not forswear himself? No, no, said he,

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he, that is the very last thing of all; he'll wind and double for an age, before that day comes, and perhaps, having spent his whole life in the exercise, leave that, at last, as a legacy to his heir at law, or executor.

I must own, I began to have an insufferably bad opinion of the law, hoping it would never be my hard hap to make the experiment; but as somewhat was now material to be done, we added my horses to my mother's, and immediately set out for C—r—n, taking the lawyer with us.

The second evening, we alighted at the gate; and upon enquiring for his Lordship, were admitted. The lawyer had instructed me to desire a sight of the will, as the first introduction to our future discourse; for that, says he, will give me opportunity of adding whatsoever may be necessary by way of reply. I did so, when his Lordship, in a seeming surprize, answered, that he knew of none there was; and turning then the question upon me; Pray, says he, did my brother ever make one? My mother, and I, both told him, that we had seen, and read it. You must have been deceived, said he; though it is not an uncommon thing in these cases, for a man who has once acted as my brother did, to stop the mouths of his hungry claimants, with the view of a will

will in their favour; but when he comes to die, he has other thoughts: The injury he is doing his family, stares him in the face, and (his reflection returning) those trifles are commonly made away with, for peace sake to his own conscience, and that his fortune may run in the natural channel. Natural channel, my Lord! says I; can it run more naturally than in his own son?

Young gentleman, says my Lord, you may give yourself what airs you please; but I am as much his son, as you are; and Westminster-hall, by a little practice there, will explain that to you, which it would be impertinent in me to enter upon here. As to the question you come upon, I tell you I know of no will of my brother's. I am his heir, and by virtue of that, I possess his estate, and shall and will enjoy it.

This peremptory reply of his Lordship's, tripp'd up my heels at once; for I had not a syllable to offer; but my lawyer (who expected I should think his fee needless, unless he could do more than myself) replied, My Lord, we very well know what we came upon; a will there was, and a will there still is, unless destroyed by ill designing practices. We insist upon examining and perusing his late Lordship's papers, and writings, in search of a will, and that none

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of his Lordship's repositories be secreted from us.

I expected, his Lordship to have exerted himself in some strain of heat; but he coolly replied, Gentlemen, you are neither relations, or executors of his Lordship's will, to my knowledge, but merely indifferent persons; and as such, all mankind have equal right to the required inspection with yourselves: I desire you will first produce some authority for your demand, or I must for ever give you the same answer as I now shall; that you shall see nothing from me, relating to my deceased brother. I hope this plain and serious answer, will be a reasonable exemption of me from any further trouble upon that head. As for you, madam, says he, to my mother; I understand you have an annuity out of my brother's estate, of eight hundred pounds a year for your life; that shall be punctually paid you, whilst you rest yourself content with it; but if that gentleman, (pointing to the lawyer) should trouble your head with any advice, that shall henceforth create me the least molestation, in the quiet enjoyment of my birthright; I shall from that moment link your annuity to the account, and stop payment, till I am reimbursed every charge and expence you shall put me

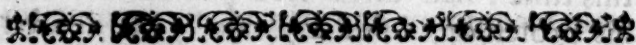
CHARLES OSBORN, Esq; is

me to. This, says he, I have given you to consider of, being obliged at present to take my leave of you.

His Lordship's back was no sooner turned, than we set out for London again; but our hopes had been so dashed by the declaration he had made to us, that we had almost abandoned ourselves to despair. Alas! my son, says my mother, what affliction will my heart suffer, when I shall not be able to employ any part of my income towards righting you, without absolutely undoing of us both! for if your uncle should stop my annuity, we are starved. Madam, said I, it will be impossible for me, to submit to the conditions my uncle would impose upon me, without quitting all my future hopes in life, and the glorious expectations I have ever been supported under; and if fortune turns but in my favour, you may be assured of not wanting your annuity, or ten times its value from me. All the difficulty will be, how to carry on the law-suit against my uncle, in case he should stop payment.

Our lawyer, I believe, was an honest man at bottom; for he gave us but small hopes of success, and even those clogged with so many ifs, and supposals, which must first be taken for granted, that expecting but
little

little relief from his endeavours, I had almost come to a resolution of submitting myself to my uncle, and leaving him in quiet enjoyment, upon his allowing me a small income out of the estate for my life; which I have all the reason in the world to believe, he would gladly have done, to have prevented his introduction on the public stage of the law.



CHAP. II.

His new lawyer. Author and mother drawn into several suits. Are reduced. His mother dies. Reflections on his condition. Resolves to shoot himself. A lady is in love with him. But can't marry, and why. Her name and face to be concealed.

WHILST I had this affair under debate in my own mind, (as indeed it almost ingrossed my sleeping as well as wakeful hours) I accidentally fell in company with (to my thinking) as sensible, a complete gentleman, as I had ever met with; and (as one's own affairs being most
at

at heart; are not always the last mentioned) I had hinted at distant particulars, relating to mine, by way of information. I found so much satisfaction from some of my enquiries, by the answers he gave me, with a seeming certainty, as facts, taken for granted by him; that it gave me encouragement, to proceed with my whole story; desiring him to give his opinion, (for by this time I had discovered that the law was his profession) upon my case. He desired to know, whether I had not already made application to some of his brethren, and what advances had been made in my business? I answered him, none, but our bare request for the will; at the same time stating my uncle's reply to us. I perfectly apprehend you, says he, smiling; and how have you been advised to act? I replied, that the lawyer I had employed, had no opinion of my case, which had hitherto determined me to acquiescence.

The man that can advise you Sir, said he, to cut your own throat, may likewise persuade you to forfeit your title to this fine estate; but surely he must either be in the interest of your adversary, or want judgment in his profession. I know not who it is, added he, nor do I desire it; there-

therefore what I say, can be no personal reflection on him; but Sir, continued he, the truth of this affair must be sifted out; intangling questions must be planted in his way, till by altering, amending, excepting, and what not, we have drawn his Lordship over head and ears into such a labyrinth, as there shall be no possible means of his escaping, without a production of the truth, or involving himself in such contradiction, as shall endanger his ears in the engagement.

Some men, added he, are born with their eyes shut, neither do they ever after open them, so long as they live; but your true staunch solicitor, like the experienced gladiator, never guides his eye to the part he aims his blow at, lest his adversary catching the glance, should clap a guard there; nor can you guess at his meaning, till he has whipped within your guard, and irretrievably pinked you. These, Sir, are the methods of a connoisseur at business; but are what few, very few attain to.

This man of law, without convincing my judgment, had so bewildered my reason, by the fluency of his speech, and mock argument; that conceiving my business as good as done, I listed among his clients, and gave him authority under my hand to pro-

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proceed, by such means as he should see
fit.

I returned overjoyed to my mother,
at the excellency of my fortune, in con-
ducting me to the knowledge of this won-
der-working lawyer. I assured her he had
set matters in quite another light before me,
than Mr. B. had done; and that if what
he said was true, there would be very
little difficulty in recovering the estate, in
a short time.

My mother, who was already prepos-
sessed with an opinion of Mr. B.'s solidity,
and judgment, was not so readily to be
induced to come into my new lawyer's way
of thinking; but begged me to be bet-
ter advised, before I proceeded any further.
This sent me again to my new lawyer (Mr.
Readyman as I shall henceforth call him)
to whom I propounded such difficulties,
as upon recollection, my mother and I had
started to ourselves, from Mr. B.'s infor-
mation; but I had no sooner so done, than
Mr. Readyman cleared them one by one,
in so just a manner, to my apprehension,
(though couched indeed in such a multi-
plicity of law terms, as were above my
comprehension, and delivered with so vo-
luble a motion, that my memory could
not retain them) that by the dust he had
thrown

thrown in my eyes, I never once doubted, but they were arguments deduced from the very marrow, and quintessence of the law itself; so that I now gave myself no further trouble about it,* but left all to his management.

The very next term, being that of Michaelmas as they call it, and soon after quarter-day, my mother, (who did not chuse to send for her annuity, till a month or six weeks after the half-year was due) upon application for it, was refused payment; and at the same time, threatned with a suit in chancery, to set her grant of it from my father aside, upon some pretence of irregularity in the deed itself, as also of a fraud in the manner of obtaining it.

This severe stroke falling upon my mother, had (through her intreaties) well nigh determined me to drop my suit, and sit down with my loss; but informing Mr. Readyman of my intention, and of the difficulty my mother would sustain by my proceedings; he desired, that he might have the liberty of advancing his opinion to her, upon the case; to which my mother consenting, an interview was agreed upon between them, and a day fixed for their meeting.

In the mean time, process was served upon my mother, to answer in relation to her annuity, why that should not cease; so that we had now two expensive suits upon our hands; but Mr. Readyman (who was not one of those who chose to lose their labour) in three quarters of an hour's argument, in which he sustained full nine tenths of the toil, not only drew in my mother (who by this time heard him as an angel) to an action at law against my uncle, but to a cross bill, as he called it, on account of the annuity; and thus loaded with all these incumbrances, did we spend our times, in termly expectation of redress, for upwards of five years.

During this time, my mother and I living together, took a low rented house, dismissed our equipage, and subsisted upon the monthly sales of our coach, horses, plate, and jewels; till we had reduced them into a very narrow compass; but as each succeeding term was to be the last, we still held out, in expectation that our suits being ended, we should have a sufficiency to repair all damages; and indeed, had not Mr. Readyman sucked so hard, we might have held out a year or two longer, in the frugal way we were in; but he having drained us down to our very household furniture,

niture, we not being able to sustain the expence any longer, fairly told him our circumstances, and that if he would carry our affairs on, he should be amply gratified upon our recovery; but that as for any further supply in the mean time, it was out of our power to afford it.

Our good friend Mr. Readyman, upon this frank declaration, demanded payment of what was then due to him, and told us, we might employ whom we pleased in our business, for he would not stir a step further; and accordingly, in two days time, sent us in a demand of one thousand eight hundred pounds.

Our suits had now been six years in hand, and (according to the best information I could get from such as I had procured to peruse his bills) by the method we were in, it might be sixteen, ere we came to a conclusion. We had at times advanced to him about one thousand, two hundred pounds, which we were assured, was about four more than was really due; but our reflections on the length of time which must necessarily run, before we could possibly be ascertained whether we ever should be worth a groat or not; and the difficulties we must in the mean time undergo, had so impressed themselves on my mother's mind, that
about

about six weeks sufferings, weighed her down to the grave.

I had, it is true, enough to bury her, and such a remainder of goods left, when collected together, as by public outcry brought me in seventy pounds; which you'll say was an extraordinary fall, from my expected thousands a year. What should I do! What step could I take! friendless, relationless! I was absolutely undone, just at the very time in life, when I was of age to enjoy the unlimited freedom of it, at the age of twenty-one; and happy it was for me, that I was no more! Happy indeed! for my good friend Readyman, had now arrested me for his whole demand; and could I not have pleaded nonage, by which I escaped a goal, I might possibly have lain there till this time.

My only resource now was to my uncle, with the humblest submission, to beg his pardon, and assistance. I pleased myself some time with that, but upon trial it failed me; for he was so far from yielding me the least comfort, that he would not so much as suffer me to approach him; my letters were also returned unopened; and my recluse life, which I had led from the death of my father, had stripped me of even the knowledge of my former acquaintance.

Under

Under the pressure of these circumstances, I took a solitary walk in the park one morning, as I did almost every day; but in so musing a posture, and mostly wrapped up in thought, that I but little took notice of who passed me; my desire at those times, being not to be known. I sat me down at the end of one of the benches, and with my arm upon the elbow, and my head reclined on my hand, with heavy aspect, was ruminating of my past, and what would be my future fortune. I had even thoughts, before my money was all gone, (for I had upwards of forty pounds left) of buying me a horse, and venturing upon the highway: Again, I laid before myself, the danger, the hazard, the disgrace, and the iniquity of it: But, if I could but raise sufficient to purchase me a commission in the army, said I, I would again relinquish the road; for I utterly abhorred the very thoughts of it.

I placed together all the commodities, and disadvantages of the sea; but could think of nothing to be attempted there, above a common sailor; and my spirit, as yet, would not stoop to that; for I still supported a genteel appearance: So that being able to conceive no way of bettering my fortune, or even of keeping life and soul

together, for any long duration; but what appeared to me, either too mean, or too abominable; my spirits sunk so all at once, into a field of unsettled, and unconnected apprehensions, that I was near dropping from my seat; when at the instant, a servant passing very quickly by me, with a brace of horse pistols in his hand; Ha! thinks I, there, there must at last center my utmost preferment; when I am reduced to the last guinea, there comes my relief.

I was just entering upon a soliloquous argument, as I usually did, in order to display both sides of the question; when an elderly lady seeming to be tired with walking, and somewhat out of breath, sat down, at a little distance from me, upon my bench. She used several little sketches of words to herself, in hopes (as I afterwards had reason to suspect) of extracting some speech from me, by way of introduction to future discourse; till perceiving me immoveably fixed, in deep contemplation; (as indeed I was, upon the mental controversy of the pistol) Sir, says she, don't you think the weather mighty warm for the time of year? She having now roused me from my dismal reverie, I fetched a deep sigh at parting with it, and replied, that I thought it was; but we must expect it warmer, be-

before we had any prospect of much more cold. (It being then the middle of April.)

I am afraid, Sir, says she, that I have broke in upon your meditations. You sigh, as if I had diverted your thoughts from your mistress; but you'll excuse me, old women are often impertinent. No, Madam, said I, a mistress was the least thing then in my mind; I was revolving affairs of more lasting consequence; I was really meditating upon my latter end. Indeed? says the old lady; it is a very rare thing, to meet with so lovely a youth as you seem to be, engaged in those cogitations; it is time enough for that, when you come to my age; you should now only have the beau-monde in your view, and make the ladies happy in your conversation. Madam, says I, you seem to be mistaken in my age; I have already been charmed with the amusements you speak of, and am past them, (fetching another sigh) nor am I anxious to protract the term of life, to any longer date; but shall soon be very resigned to part with it. Come, come, says she, I can find out your malady. Will you answer me one question? The old gentlewoman seeming so good humoured, and hearty, gave me such present ease, that I assured her, I would answer her quere ingenuously. Have you

you not been crossed in love? says she; I promised her, that I had not, upon my honour, as to any thing of womankind. I am sure you have, some other way, then, replied she. I told her, I could not say, but therein she might possibly be right; for that I had been crossed in the hopes of a noble estate, which an uncle of mine at present detained from me. Well, says she, and will not another do as well as that? If I had it, I replied, it would. And why may not such a thing happen, says she, to you, as well as to another?

Madam, says I, let us call another subject; this is too heavy for me to manage. I hope, says she, and don't doubt (by your appearance like a gentleman) that you have some pretty fortune to live upon, though you may have been deprived of your larger expectations. Why so inquisitive, Madam? says I; but yet, you are a good serious lady, and as it is some relief, but to unbosom ones self, to one who can have no interest in aggravating one's concern: I must tell you, Madam, that I am so far from being master of the pretty fortune you mention, that I have not fifty pounds in the whole world; and what makes my misfortune to exceed is, that my education hath been, according to my supposed interest in thirty thousand

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pounds

pounds a year, and not according to my present necessitous circumstances ; for had I been bred to cleaning shoes, or sweeping chimnies, I had been content, while I could have acted suitable to my calling ; but having had my natural capacity embellished with every artificial ornament, preparatory to a more exalted station ; and at length, without any culpableness in myself, to be degraded from my proper rank, and be set as far beneath those of my present fortune, as their ability for action in their own sphere, exceeds mine ; that I say, madam, gauls me to the quick, and renders my life insupportable.

Sir, says the old lady, I heartily pity you. I thank you, madam, says I, and possibly that may be all my deplorable circumstances may ever recommend me to ; but be it so, the man that is wretched, need not want one remedy, when matters come to a crisis. So fine a gentleman as yourself, Sir, says she, can't be without a heart to bestow ; and how many ladies would esteem it their chief happiness, could they assure themselves they were mistresses of it.

Alas, Madam ! says I, how you talk ! could yourself now in the whole circle of fair within your knowledge, point out one, that without an equivalent, would place

place themselves, and their substance, in the hands of a man, of even far superior qualifications to what I can pretend to? I could, replied she, and can; but that she is under the strongest tie imaginable not to marry; and that I may no longer speak behind the curtain, one, who at this instant pants for you. Come, Sir, says she, I have made such advances to you, that nothing but the exigence of the case could have compelled me to. You may imagine, Sir, it is no grateful task, for a lady to take the course I have done with you; but this is not the first time by many, that my friend and I have seen you, and observed you melancholy too; till your seeming disquiet grew too severe to be tolerated by her, without an offer of relief.

Madam, said I, you have so confounded me with the notion of this lady's compassion for so unworthy an object, that I am at a loss to explain the tender sentiments with which my heart already abounds towards her. Is it possible! can it be true! or do I dream only! Can there yet, upon earth, be that kind creature that will look on me! O that I had ten thousand lives to offer her! or as many ages to do her service in! all, all would be too small a recompence for one kind glance, upon so

wretched a creature as I am ; but, Madam, said I, pardon the overflowings of my passion, and let me entreat you to assure me, whether this lady you mention is a reality, or only some amiable character which you have drawn, as the masterpiece of woman-kind ?

The old lady then began. Since, Sir, we are fairly engaged in this argument, it will not become me to disguise the subject we are upon, through a reservedness, either in my speech or behaviour to you. We are all, both men and women the same creatures, not only for substance, but for inclinations and passions. We equally have love and hatred implanted in our natures, and from unaffected choice, would act upon the very same principles and motives ; though custom hath varied it in the different sexes, by allotting it as your province to ask, and ours to yield ; and decency requires in general, that it should be so : but is there any general rule without its exception ? May not things be so circumstanced, as even to invert the order of nature ? much more then, matters of mode and ceremony only. Now the circumstances of this lady are of the latter sort ; for I would not have you undervalue her esteem, for the offer she makes you of it.

Heaven

Heaven forbid! said I. No, Madam, it comes loaded to my ears with infinite blessings, that I could never have expected, from an affection gained by my own petition.

Well then, says she, this lady (her father having met with misfortunes) was bred up with a batchelor uncle; one, who detested our whole sex but herself; he was excessive rich, and might have married her into very great families, every one expecting that he would have given her a vast fortune; but his aversion to the marriage-state himself, was such, that he would by no means receive proposals for that of his niece; and she was sensible that her future interest so much depended upon him; that she would admit of no addresses without his consent.

In this manner they lived together, till her twentieth year, when her uncle died. You need not doubt, but that she then expected, not only an immense fortune, but her liberty to dispose of it, and her person, as she pleased; but see the perverseness of some dispositions; that old fellow's effects, which had rendered no one but himself happy, in his lifetime, descended at his death, clogged with a clause of horror to his successor; for though he left her every penny,

to the amount of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds; yet in case she married before she arrived at the age of forty five years, it was all to go to trustees, for the building and support of an hospital. This, Sir, you will say, was a mortifying tenure for a young creature to hold her wealth by; for I can assure you this is no fictitious character, as you was pleased to imagine; but really as beautiful a young lady, as ever the sun shone on.

Madam, says I, may I be honoured with the name of the lady? I shall be plain with you, Sir, replied she, you may not. Neither are her circumstances generally known to be such as I have represented to you; for she is unwilling, that the world should be apprized of the unlucky situation she is in, lest it should cause reflections upon her; so that her name will never be known to you, or even her face seen by you, unless upon a better acquaintance, such mutual confidence may arise, as shall make it necessary. I thought it but my part to signify thus much to you, that you may not hereafter suspect yourself injured, by a denial.

I highly approved of the former part of the old lady's discourse; but I knew not what to think of the latter; being sorely afraid

afraid that I was to be drawn into some scurvy secret, which might prove detrimental to me; but what, thinks I, have I to lose? it cannot be in expectation of gain from me, who have already made so open a confession of my poverty. Perhaps this means is contrived, and this story framed, to procure an heir to some rich family; be it so, the child will be well provided for; myself came into being the same way; but has not this old lady a colt's tooth in her own head? Suppose she has, she is no ways disagreeable, and imagining her to be young, it will be the same thing. I'll venture for once; I shall soon see whether any benefit will arise from it; if not, I can drop them; they can't compel me to attend their call; and it may prove (if all is true) my future establishment.

I made now no more words of it; but returning the old lady infinite thanks for the comfort she had administered to me, I begged that she would inform me when, and where, I might hope for the opportunity of being completely blessed. She told me, that at the same hour in the next day, she would see me again, at the same place, and give me further satisfaction to my demand; and thereupon we parted.

CHAP. III.

Is to go to her that night. Is put into a close chair. Set down in an unknown house. Sups with a lady behind the curtain. Instructed how to behave. Has a bedfellow. Receives great presents. Is dismissed the third evening.

THE adventures of this day brought more reflections to my mind, than it was possible for me to digest into regular order; nor (after the whole night spent in the same exercise) could I form any tolerable conclusions of what would most likely be the issue of my conference with the old lady; but upon the whole, I was resolved to wait her appointment.

I dressed myself in a more elegant taste than the preceding day, (for I was then but in dishabile) and before the appointed hour, had taken my seat, waiting for her, with the utmost impatience. My eye was ever turning, either up, or down the walk; when at length, the moment of her arrival approached. My heart then beat, as it would

would have forced a passage through my side; and my notions flew so thick to my brain, that they almost interrupted the display of my senses; till being seated by me, and beginning with her want of breath, the tediousness of the walk, and several inconveniencies she suffered; I begged her to publish to me the news she had brought; for I told her, that I had been upon such a rack ever since she had left me, that my sufferings were intolerable, till I was further ascertained what I had to hope, or fear, from the fear, though unknown, object, that had now ingrossed my whole affections.

Young gentleman, say she, you seem to express yourself in the raptures of a lover to day; whereas I feared yesterday, that your heart was rather stony. O Madam, replied I, is it possible that a lady of any merit, can cast a condescending eye on me, and I not be in raptures? No, Madam, delay my sentence no longer, let me (from your report) know whether I am to live, or die for her? Come, come, says she, we can't promise ourselves success in every thing, both sexes are frail, and fickle; and we must sometimes wait with patience, no inconsiderable delays, in an amour of consequence; but why are you so ready

at dying too, as well as living? Madam, said I, you are not now a stranger to my affairs; and yesterday, at the instant of contriving my death, you brought me hopes of life; now if this day you leave me but where you found me, as the transition was then so facile from death, to life; this lady's resolves, shall again with equal speed determine me, from life to death.

Live then, Sir, says she, and may you make my friend as happy, as she can you. Clear up, Sir, despond no more, behave but well to her, she has power to set you above the frowns of fortune, and will do it; but be prudent, be kind, be cautious; for your well-being will greatly depend upon your own temper, and incuriousness. Meet me here at nine o'clock to night, when I'll conduct you to your wishes.

I then rising from my seat, grasped her hand, and had certainly proceeded to some extravagancy, had she not very tartly asked me, whether I recollected where I was? which brought me to myself again. I then calmly told her, that as her face would ever appear to me as that of an angel, I hoped that her first introduction of me, to my felicity, would not be the loss of her acquaintance; for that I could never sufficiently discharge the obligation I was un-

der to her, and could sustain no greater disappointment, than a total privation of her company and conversation. She replied, that as it would be always in my power to gratify myself, it would henceforth be my own fault, if I missed giving her occasion of testifying her constant zeal for my service; and that the next time we met, she would let me know where she lived, and should ever be glad to see me.

No sooner was she gone, than I would have given the world, to have had it nine o'clock. — I knew not what to do with myself. — I could settle to nothing. — I arose. — I walked. — I sat upon every bench in the park. — I could rest in no one situation; but my mind fluctuating here and there, my body attended it. — I counted Buckingham clock every hour of its striking. — I was tired. — I was faint, having neither eaten, nor drank all day; nor could I find leisure for it now. In short, I was only a lump of inconsistency; nor did I once quit the park, till the dear hour of nine arrived, which brought with it my old lady, more delightful to my eye, than Venus herself could have been.

She began without further preface, come, Mr. Osborn, come with me. I started; Madam, said I, that name from

you surprizes me. O dear, says she, could you imagine I did not know you? I replied, It was more than I was sensible of; but I was still under further obligation to her. Yes, says she, I have known you many years, and so has the lady you are now going to; but as you would prosper with her, observe the instructions, I have before given you.

By this time, we were come into Spring-garden, where a chair waited; and upon sight of the old lady, they opened it; she desired me to walk in, for she had another waiting in the street, and would follow me. I would have complimented her with that, but she seeming uneasy at it, I entered, and committed myself to her guidance.

I was no sooner seated, than the chair-man moved with me. Now thinks I, will I observe every turning, that I may know the house again that I am carried to, and by that means, shall soon discover the lady, be she who she will. I drew back first one curtain (for they were all close drawn when I got in) then another; but one continued wooden blank was my whole prospect. I did not doubt but when I had let the shutters down, I should find glass windows; but my efforts were all entirely vain, which put me under no little consternation.

had

had a thousand thoughts in my head, and fancies of robbery, murder, and what not? but I was embarked, and it was now too late to look back.

I am certain, I could not be less than an hour in the chair; sometimes, to my thinking, turning round and round, and then going forward again; till at last, rising up some steps, I heard the fellows feet, as it were treading on a mat; after that on paved stones, then a few paces on boards, when setting down, they opened the door, and turned me into a large handsome parlour; and before I could move round to pay them, they were gone.

The room was light up with wax lights, in sconces all round it, and every part of the furniture, the most excellent in its kind; but I had not long time to survey it, before my old lady entered, and after her, a servant with a salver of wine, red and white. She drank to me, and I pledged her; (but before the servant) durst not venture on a health, that I scarce knew how to omit; and upon the servant's retiring, I told her so; which prudent caution, she very much commended in me, saying, I should be no sufferer for it.

We then fell into chat upon news, and other indifferent affairs, for about a quarter

of an hour; when a little bell ringing, she desired me to walk up to supper, she herself taking two wax candles from the table, and going before me.

At the head of the stairs, she desired me to walk into the dining room. I did so, but was very much struck with the oddity of its appearance; for near to the door I entered at, it was very well illuminated; but turning to my right hand, which ran the length-ways of the room, there was no candle at all, even upon the table, which was most elegantly spread, with abundance of dainties. Upon a nearer view, I perceived both the room and table were divided in half, by a large, fine, white, and thin silk curtain, which hung from the ceiling to the ground.

The old lady having left her candles at the further end of the room, came up to me, and perceiving me somewhat nice, in my observation of the curtain, and table, she whispered me, that as she had before given me a hint, that the lady of that house was not to be known; so, when I should see her move behind the curtain, I was to behave to her equally, as if she was present with me, face to face.

I promised her to pursue directions; but the table being so exquisitely adorned,
and

and I having fasted all day, my mind was at present more intent on that, than the coming in of my mistress; this being a repast, most proper to succeed that; but I had scarce leisure to think so, before the perfect shape of a very large lady became visible upon the curtain, which as she approached nearer to the table, diminished, to an exact regularity of height, and dimension. I no sooner observed it to be her, than I made a handsome bow, which she returned with a curtsey. Sir, said she, I fear I have made you wait, but pray be seated. I replied, that he who could at any time be blessed with her company, had every reason to attend her pleasure; then seating herself, I was going to sit over against her; but the old lady directed me more to the right hand, and I was presently sensible of the justness of the position that she had assigned me; for now I was confirmed, that as I saw every the least action, and motion, of hers upon the partition, so she could observe mine; which had we sat opposite to each other, would in great measure have been prevented, by the intermixture of our shades upon the curtain.

I fed very heartily, and our discourse flowed in the most pleasing passages. We drank

drank each other's healths, and I soon became delighted with my entertainment; for save that we could not behold each other's complexions, and the colours of our cloaths, every other gesture, action, and proportion, were as truly represented, as if no curtain had interposed.

We had no servant attending us; but every thing that could be wanted standing within reach, made it the less necessary; and I observed, that the old lady, who sat unveiled by my side, paid great deference to her, behind the curtain.

I had no sooner allayed the edge of my appetite, than I began my remarks of every minute thing that passed between us; and first, that I had never in my whole life received such satisfaction from the human voice, as I then did from my incognita's; (for that name I shall henceforth call her by) so that I forced the conversation, merely for the pleasure of delighting my ears with it. She had the readiest flow of wit and good humour, that ever I heard; the former of which, though I wanted not myself, and the latter no man had ever greater occasion to exert; yet I found my deficiency very apparently in both, when put into competition with hers: So that save the superiority of good sense,
which

which I was obliged to yield to her, I never spent an evening with equal delight before.

The desert, consisting of the most agreeable gusts, still standing before us; as I perceived that she, frequently in the chasms of our discourse, picked out one thing, and then another; I did the same; which rendered the remains of the collation less disagreeable to us. Having passed our time in this manner, till the clock had struck twelve, the lady arose, wished me a good night, and retired.

Having drank a cheerful glass of wine with my supper, and after it, I then caught my old lady by the hand; My dearest conductress, said I, where am I next to be disposed of? Sir, said she, if you please, I will shew you your chamber. Pardon me, dear lady, said I, for presuming to ask whether I am to lye alone? for I have committed myself entirely to your guidance, and beg you will direct every step of my future conduct, in the most agreeable manner.

Well then, says she, since you are so conformable, follow me; but observe, that I shall lead you through one bed-chamber, into another; take particular notice of the first, how every thing is situated
in

in it; for in the second, I shall leave you, which is the room beyond it; there is a bed in each; so that it will be your own fault, if you lye alone.

She then taking up the candles, preceded me to my lodgings; and on crossing the first chamber, says she, take notice; the next room is yours. My eye had soon collected the sight of every thing, and I remarked very carefully the position of the bed, in respect to my door-way; for that I conceived to be the most material point.

Upon entering what the good lady had called my room, there was (lying on the table) an handsome wrought night-cap, with a broad lace upon it; and on the bed, a very rich blue damask night-gown, and a pair of red Morocco slippers by the bedside; these she told me, were for my use; but willed me not to lye down, till she tapped at another door she shewed me, in the same room, but at a different quarter of it; and then, says she, you may rest in which of the two beds you approve of.

I returned her a profusion of thanks for all her favours to me; and indeed, thought she had declared herself as fully to my purpose, as she fairly could in a modest way; but when upon taking her leave of me, she had possessed herself of both my candles;

My

My dear conductress, said I, am I to be left intirely in the dark? No, no, said she, the door I shall tap at, is of glass, and your candles shall both be so placed without it, as not only to give you light to undress by, but to find the way into next room, which having entered, you are to lock it after you.

It could not now be long, before I should know what I had to trust to; for my generous entertainment, had dissipated all further doubt of danger from the adventure; so that I wholly undressed, slipping on my night implements, and with no small impatience attended my signal. I had not been long prepared, before I heard it, and the instant I had laid my hand on the handle of the lock of the next room, in which I understood I was to meet my bedfellow, the lights were obscured, and I found myself in utter darkness.

I had made my observations too justly to be capable of a mistake; for my side of the bed was so near to the wainscot on my left hand, as only to leave me a passage to the head of it, where I took notice there was a chair, to deposite my gown in; so that I had no sooner locked the door, than casting off my gown, I stepped in. I shall only inform my reader, that I lay not alone that night. We

We were awakened in the morning by the old lady; who enquiring after our healths, and how we had rested, told us, our breakfast waited. While she kept on her talk, I observed a gentle rustling, and in a trice, my bedfellow casting a wrapper round her, had tripped out of the room; then the old lady opening the door where-in my cloaths lay, told me, she believed I should have light enough to rise by, and that if I rung the bell when I was ready, she would conduct me to the breakfast-room.

Having thrown back my curtains for rising, the sight of day light from the next room, (which from that day went by the name of mine) revived me exceedingly; for now thinks I, I may possibly from the window, be able to form some judgment of the place I am in; but slipping on my gown and slippers, and approaching the window, I discovered my mistake; for a hollow frame of boards without side, extending somewhat higher than the window, (though it let in sufficient light to the room for common uses) intirely obstructed my prospect.

Turning to the bed, in order to sit upon its side, to dress myself, I saw an exceeding fine holland shirt, with laced ruffles; how's
this!

this? thinks I, is it for me? Then reaching my hand to it, and feeling it warm, soon convincing me of its destination, I made the proper use of it; but before I had entirely adjusted it, feeling in my breeches pocket for my sleeve buttons, (which upon discharging my foul linen I had put there,) I found a paper in my way, which I did not recollect to have been there the day before. I therefore first took out that; and upon opening it, it presented me with a bank-note of five hundred pounds.

I blessed my good fortune, which had guided me to the embraces of the lovely mistress of the house, and putting the note up again, was about to button my sleeves; but my shirt was already supplied with a pair of diamond ones, of extraordinary size. Surely, thinks I, my lot hath fallen on a good soil, for this seems to be the land of plenty, indeed. Then taking my stock to put on, the charming buckle annexed to it, but the more confirmed my imagination, for that was of diamonds also, of no mean value.

I had made so many pauses, in examining my new acquests, that lest I should be waited for at breakfast, I proceeded with all dispatch to my shoes; but they had been exchanged

exchanged for a pair of Spanish, exactly fitting me, with a pair of gold buckles in the straps of them.

Having compleated that part of my dress, I went to wash my hands, in a China bason, standing on the side of my glass, with a China bottle placed in it for the water; when upon taking up the bottle, I found two rings, one a diamond, and the other a sapphire. I was in some doubt about them, whether designed for me, or not; but thinks I, as every thing else hath been so genteelly placed, as necessarily to draw me to the use of them, I can't see how these could have been more opportunely disposed for the purpose; and certainly they must be for my use also. So having washed, I applied them to such of my fingers, as they would best fit, which were the two little ones.

By this time the old lady was come, to invite me to breakfast; when I observed, that she had got candles at my back-door; and desiring me to follow her, ushered me down that way, into a small room, wherein were lights, disposed just in the manner of the dining-room which I had been in the night before, with a curtain in the middle.

Being

Being in somewhat better heart than on the preceding evening, I took upon me to thank the old lady, for all the superlative enjoyments she had introduced me to; and told her, how free I had made with the jewels, and linen I had found in my chamber, not forgetting my gratitude for the extraordinary benefaction, with which my pocket had surprized me, and begged her ingenuously to inform me, if my conduct had proved satisfactory in all things; and that she would continue to be my instructor, in whatever was to succeed.

Mr. Osborn, said she, you are no ways to blame, in being inquisitive after these things; and in all that you have hitherto transacted, have behaved with becoming prudence. Retain only your gaiety, and freedom, content yourself with such entertainment as you receive, without prying into concealments; be entirely *debonair*, and you need never fear succeeding, in the esteem of her, whose power it is in, to render both your person and circumstances completely felicitous.

By this time the shadow of my incognita had darkened the curtain, and I paid her my compliments with less constraint than the foregoing evening. She enquired after my health, hoping I had rested well,

she

she said. I replied, incomparably, never better in my life; and thus, without tiring my reader, we carried on the farce, as perfect acquaintance, only, wholly ignorant of what had passed since supper-time, and our whole day was spent in the most agreeable manner imaginable.

At night the old lady preceded me to my chamber; but being now master of my business, I only wished her good night, and on the warning-rap, which I expected, proceeded as the night before; but could no ways in our solitude, avoid my acknowledgments for the infinite obligations of the preceding morning. My incognita answered, it was all very lucky indeed, and that surely I must have a very good friend somewhere; to which I made no other reply, than by straining my arms more closely, to the object they then enclosed.

The next morning presented me not only with clean linen, but a noble suit of dove-colour cloth cloaths, full trimmed, with broad silver lace, a new gilt and enameled sword, and laced hat; all which I dressed in, but could not conceive how it was possible for them to fit me so exactly, as they did, unless made up by my own taylor.

Having

Having passed the next day in manner of the last; about nine of the clock in the evening, the old lady beckoned me out of the room. She then told me, she would not have me imagine myself a prisoner where I was; for that undoubtedly, having some business in the world, it would be necessary for me to be disengaged from further attendance; and that my chairman waited for me below.

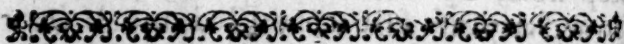
Madam, says I, pardon me, for being so bold to assure you, that an age, continued in the pleasures I have enjoyed since your kindness first conducted me hither, would in my esteem, pass in the most consummate delights; neither can I have a wish for quitting my station, that is not raised upon the hope of a more exquisite enjoyment of them, by relaxation. I am wholly at your command; but let me not depart, hopeless of a speedy return; for I shall live, but upon the prospect of that hour.

Mr. Osborn, says she, I have lived longer in the world than you have; and am sensible, that too much wine may overcome the head; and too much sweetmeat pall the appetite; when in either case, a repetition of the subject breeds loathing: whereas by proper abstinence they both

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become

become agreeable again; but as to the prospect of your return, let it be when it best suits you; or to fix the time myself, be it the day se'night of your arrival here. In the mean time, visit now and then the play and opera; be gay, and appear in parts of public resort; fear not the expence, you will not feel it. On that evening at nine, I shall wait on you at your bench in the park. I kissed her hand, was shewn down into the parlour that I first arrived at, entered my chair, and went off.



CHAP. IV.

Imagines all to be a dream. Is reconducted to his Incognita as he called her. Imagines he had met her at the play. Sups with her. Offers her marriage. Is rejected. Finds it is not she. Incognita declares herself with child. Decoys a draper's daughter as a mistress. Is reduced by extravagance.

I Had received so many cautions against inquisitiveness, that I durst not so much as call to my chairmen, to tell them where I would

I would be let down; for thinks I, that may be an offence; and no doubt, but they have their instructions. Now as I was not to be acquainted which way I came thither, If I am to see which way I go back again, it will amount to the same thing; and I may severely pay for my folly. No, e'en let them have the management of me as they please, I'll never give them a handle to distress me, in the privation of all hopes of my future fortune.

I must own, I could have wished for a peep-hole, by which I might just have informed myself where I was; but as all was close, I determined to be so to, let them set me down where they would.

I had been moving for some time, but not so long, I was certain, as I had been in my first journey; when they pitched me at Spring-garden, where they took me up before; I offered to pay them, and had my hand in my pocket for that purpose; but slipping in their pole, they were gone in an instant.

I confess, that when I found myself in the same place, whence I first set out upon this adventure, I could scarce persuade myself that I was awake; till viewing my cloaths, my rings, my whole transformation, I was sure all had been real that had

happened, and bethought me, in what manner I should now dispose myself.

My lodging had for some time been but very indifferent, and I was even in arrears for that. I determined therefore to go home that night, and pay it, and the next day to seek out for a better; for thinks I, as the old lady hath informed me of hers, and invited me to visit her, I can do no less than beg the like favour; and that must be received in a place proper for the purpose. I therefore returned to my lodging, but my landlord upon sight of me, would scarce let me in; and it was with no little difficulty, that I obtained his acknowledgement of my being his lodger; for he had never seen me so gay before. At length; my speech and countenance introducing me, I immediately went to bed, to consider on some resolves, for my future conduct.

I began, upon some expensive schemes that I had in my head, and my heart was now returning to my former grandeur; when I checked myself, with, what is to succeed this noble acquisition I know not. It is true, I have obtained in two days time, a very ample share both of satisfaction and reward; but this may be the last bounty I may ever receive from that quarter, for
aught

ought I know. If I should never meet the old lady again, I am ignorant where to enquire for the young one. It is true, I have the greatest reason to believe I shall taste her future favours, by all that has passed between us; but if she is the fortune that the old lady reports her to be; this may be only a particular method of hers, to divert herself with the company of different young fellows, undiscovered; and I am not to ascribe these noble donations, to her peculiar affection for me only. Upon recollection, thinks I, it must be so; for all these preparations could not have been so suddenly made upon my account. No, no, there is no doubt but this has been a work of time, and calculated to a great nicety; and possibly, fifty young fellows may have participated of her favours this way already: but, replied I, surely she has not shoes, and suits of all sorts by her too; for if mine had been made on my back, they could not have set truer; and if they were actually made for me in so small a space, and only by the measure of the eye, why may not all things else have been prepared, in as short a time for my reception.

In this manner, did I run on in my own mind, till near morning; being at last as far to seek in the mystery of what had happened,

pened, as I was before ; but this resolution I had come to ; not to alter my lodgings, or change my bank note, till I should see the old lady again ; for now I was possessed of that, I resolved to purchase me a commission in the army, if nothing more came of it ; as I really began to have little hopes, there would.

It would be endless to relate every alteration of my conjectures, during the ensuing week ; with the numberless contradictions to the different opinions I was in, from morning to night ; for I neither knew what I was doing at home, or whitherto I was going abroad, it ran so in my head ; till to my excessive comfort, the hour appointed arriving, brought the dear messenger of my destiny with it ; when no reprieve at the gallows to a condemned malefactor, could be received with more joy, than I received her invitation to move towards the gardens with her. I was all extasy, all rapture.

My conductress, discovering by my looks and behaviour, the effects her presence had upon me, could not forbear taking notice of it, by telling me she thought me more sprightly, and engaging that night, than she had ever seen me before. Dear Madam, said I, can I be otherwise, at the near approach of the bliss, I have so long waited

for ?

for? I am satisfied, says she, you have some further occasion, for the excess of delight which you are not able to hide from me, than that. Madam, said I, would you see my soul? I would, says she. Then the truth is, replied I, being ignorant both of the lady, the house, the street, the every thing, where I was before with you; and at the same time absolutely undeserving of the favours I have received; I was melancholy, to conceive it to be but possible, that I might hear no more from her or you; which thought so depressed my spirits, that it is no wonder I should exult upon feeling myself deceived.

Mr. Osborn, says she, your future felicity (if that lady can lengthen, or enlarge it) is out of question; for it is impossible, for any other than yourself to be prejudicial to you. Her favours, which you prize so highly, have hitherto been but preludes to what is still to come, dependent on the rules I have laid down for your guidance. Persevere but in the way you are in, and fear nothing, but too much inquisitiveness; steer but clear of that rock, and you are safe.

Being now arrived at the chair, I took my seat in it, and was as before released at my parlour door. We supped, we bedded,

we arose, and I, that morning, was owner of one of the neatest gold watches I ever saw, with another five hundred pound note in my pocket. I staid as before two nights, when I was again dismissed to the day se'nnight of my coming: But the old gentlewoman said, I had behaved in all respects so much like a man of honour, and in pursuance of her injunction, that she would not come for me at the time appointed, but only the chair should wait, into which I was to enter without further questions.

I had during my former recess, (as she had directed me) frequented the publick places; where though I was in great hopes of meeting my incognita, and by some token or other of discovering her; yet nothing had offered, that could become a foundation for the least suspicion of such a thing; and in this my leisure time, I also practised the same method: one evening, being in the boxes at the opera house, rather before they filled; as I sat leaning against the partition, in one of the front rows, three ladies exquisitely dressed entering, and descending to the seat I sat upon, I was stepping backwards over it, to make room for them to take my place; when the most charming creature that ever was exhibited

bited in flesh and blood, calling to me, begged she might not dispossess me of my seat, and at the same time assured me, (for I insisted upon relinquishing it to her) that rather than I should move, she would quit the box, and retire to another. She being so peremptory, obliged me in good manners to retain my place; though I confessed the shame and confusion I suffered at it.

She, for some time, applied her discourse wholly to the two ladies her companions, and exceeding pleasant they were, seeming to take no notice of me; till (as by accident) dropping her fan I recovered, and presented it to her; her compliments on that occasion, drawing an answer from me, which was replied to by her, and I keeping the discourse still on foot, we were by this time engaged in a strong chat, and continued so till the play began; which though it gave us some present interruption, we resumed it again at proper intervals.

I could have sworn, whenever she spoke, that it was the very same voice I had been so used to from behind the curtain; but yet, methoughts, there seemed to be some force upon the tone, being raised to somewhat a shriller pitch; then several phrases, which I well remembered, occurring, absolutely convinced me that it must be her, and no
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other.

other. This, said I, is certainly the meaning, why I was directed to use the publick diversions; that she might unsuspected by me, gratify herself in my company bare-faced; but I think, I can't be now deceived in her, and wherever I see her again, shall be able to single her out, as the most perfect of her sex, let who will else be present.

The play being ended, I presented her my hand to her coach, which she accepting, I further offered my service, to see her, and the other ladies safe home; when after several compliments passed, they suffered me to attend them; and upon my ushering them into the house, she very complaisantly desired my company to sup with them. I accepted the favour, and very elegantly I was entertained by them, not one of the male sex appearing in the family, but servants. We played at cards till almost two o'clock in the morning, and then parted.

I made the best remarks that I could of the house, at my going away, and walked up and down the street several times, purposely to be sure of not mistaking it again, the next day; for I purposed in my own mind, to enquire her name then, and to drink tea with her. After so many observations as the darkness of night would permit

mit me to point out, I retired to my lodging, fully convinced that I had discovered my Incognita.

Being so well furnished with money, and accoutred in all other respects, without the least expence to me; and having received such future hopes from the old lady, of the continuance of fortune's smiles, I had removed my lodgings into Pallmall, at two guineas a week, and put a servant into livery, revived some of my former acquaintance, and once more made a figure in life, that few gentlemen need be ashamed to appear in.

My adventure engaging my mind next day; I made private enquiry after the lady's name, with whom I had supped, and was informed it was B——n; that she was a great fortune, and had lived there several years; that she was single, very gay, and a lady of exceeding good character, and very charitable. These marks of distinction agreeing so well to my Incognita, but the more confirmed me in my former opinion. I waited on her in the afternoon, and drank tea with her, where nothing could be more free, open, and unreserved than her behaviour to me. I attended her, and another young lady to court, and in short, being by this time

fully persuaded who she was, and being ten times more enamoured of her, than before; I ventured to propose marriage to her.

I presently perceived, that I had planted my battery too high; for from that moment, I was denied access to her house; nor did I ever meet her in public, but she avoided me. I knew not what to make of this conduct, for I was still received with open arms, as usual, at the old rendezvous; till at last, I gave over the thoughts of her being the same person with my Incognita, and pursued my interest wholly with the latter; from whom, still receiving large tokens of affection, and supplies; my natural gaiety returning with my affluence, I laid so little restraint upon my inclinations, that I lived in a very expensive, and even profuse manner.

As the old lady had left off her appointments with me, the only notice I had now of my Incognita's inclination to my visits was, either going, or sending my servant every night to Spring Garden, for intelligence, whether the chair was at its stand; and if so, I never failed my attendance.

It was about three months after I had engaged in this affair, that my Incognita declared to me her pregnancy, at which I

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very much rejoiced; hoping that would so rivet me in her favour, that by degrees, I should be discharged from the incertainty I lived in; and that I might some time or other, be sensible to whom I had been so much obliged, by a more open treatment than behind the curtain; and one night, when she grew near her time of delivery, I put the question to her, how it was possible for her, to restrain me from that pleasure she must be sensible I should conceive, in the more publick acknowledgment of my benefactress? The eye, I told her, was one of the great inlets of joy to the heart, and whilst a veil was cast over that, every comfort could be but partial; and as already, my life was so wrapped up in her perfections, that I prized her above all mortals; so, could I but be indulged with the sight of her person, I should absolutely adore her; and now, says I, should I become the father of a child, for whom I can point out no mother, what an unhappiness must it be to me, in case of your death?

She heard me very patiently; but replied, that she understood I had been sufficiently apprized of her circumstances, and incapacity for marriage, which was it but possible to remove, no man should have been ~~her~~ husband preferable to myself; but

as

as that tie must remain upon her; she would never put it into any man's power, to point at his whore, in her person. As for the child, she said, (whatever it should prove) I need be under no concern for it, as herself would not fail to make ample provision for it. As to the rest, says she, all I have to say is, that my future regard for you, depends wholly on your nescience of my person; for the instant you attempt to gain more knowledge of me, than you already have, I am yours no more. Let your fancy therefore supply a face, and having formed it to your wish, believe it mine; though I can assure you, modestly speaking, I am neither old, or disagreeable.

She told me, she should not expect me, till she should be up again, and desired, that about six weeks after, I would look out for the chair, which should attend the very first night that she could admit me.

I was very much afraid, that some accident might fall out in so many weeks, looking upon it as an age to come; and informed her of my new lodgings; that in case any thing should happen, necessary for my knowledge, she might by the old lady apply to me. As my absence was now to be so long, I received a bill of eight hundred

dred pounds, and in a few days after, four rich suits of cloaths, (which I used to wear alternately, when at her house) were in my absence, left for me at my lodgings, by a porter.

I had now a great length of time upon my hands to range in, with a fresh supply in my pocket; but the ease with which I obtained it, had set aside all thoughts of my commission; and indeed, I had relinquished even the disposition for saving my money, which I first set out with; so that my Incognita's contributions, large as they were, would scarce hold out from one to another; for feeling it flow in with such facility, I seldom considered what became of it, but let it go, as it came.

During this recess, I say, being one day at a draper's to buy some ruffles; I could not restrain my eyes, from a very beautiful object, his daughter, then in the shop. She could not (to my thinking) be more than seventeen years of age; but so lovely a sweetness attended each feature, as quite captivated me. My attention to her was so keen, that I had agreed, and paid for the goods, even before I justly knew the price of them; and still enquired after other things, in order for a pretence of continuing the longer near her. I desired to know,
whether

whether he could recommend me to any person who would make my ruffles up for me, as I should require them to be exceeding neatly done, and for that reason, would willingly allow an extraordinary price.

While the draper was considering whom to recommend, Miss asked me, what price I used to give? Madam, said I, I think it was two shillings a pair, (though I was sensible that was too much) but as I must insist on their neatness, I never stint myself in price, and should not think much of half a crown, if they answer in the perfection. Papa, says she, if the gentleman pleases, I'll make them for him myself; and believe he will have no reason to condemn my needle work.

Madam, says I, you infinitely oblige me; and if it will not be too much trouble to you, I shall place a great value upon the favour. She then arose, and with a piece of tape, measuring my wristband, applied her middle finger to my ruffle, as a guide for the depth of the new ones, asking me several questions about the hem, and other particulars; when observing her father enter the back shop, with an armful of goods; I squeezing her hand, begged to salute her; which she admitting of, I swore, that I had then kissed the most blooming maid upon earth.

Miss

Miss seemed not a little proud of my compliment, and promising to bring me her work the latter end of the week, (for I had told her my lodgings) I took my leave of her, thinking no more of it. But I soon found I was not to come off so; for the little hussy had glewed herself so to my heart, that I had scarce an idea of any thing else, till I saw her person, at the appointed time, with my ruffles.

I was expecting her, when my servant opening my dining room door, introduced her. I had my tea equipage before me, and was at breakfast; when ordering a chair, I desired her to sit, and partake with me; both which, having first modestly refused, she accepted. Her company, and charming conversation, protracted my breakfast to an unusual length; nor would it have ended with the day, but for her rising to be gone.

I had passed abundance of compliments, and said all the engaging things I could devise to her; and on offering to pay her, I clapped my purse (with about fifty guineas) into her hand. O dear sir, said she, I can't give you change. Yes, my life, said I, for hundreds of such sums as these. In short, says I, you have compleated your conquest over me, and I must

must have you in my possession. She blushed most intollerably, and begged me to let her go, (for I had drawn her to my knee, with my arm round her) she should be undone else; for that her father would have had her sent the ruffles, and if she staid, or seemed discomposed at her return, he would never forgive her.

Look you, my dear, says I, don't you see those fine cloaths (pointing to mine in a chair) all gold and silver? such shall be yours, if you will live with me; for my delight will be to see you fine. I will attend you to every polite diversion, and in short, your whole life shall be one continued circle of delights. Is not that better think you, than to sit cross-legged, stitching in your father's shop, whole days together, in this trumpery linen gown? What say you, my angel, be joyous, be free, let the old ones mind business, while you range the town like a duchess.

Observing that my discourse had staggered her, by its gilt prospect, I smothered her with kisses, and swinging her into my bed-room at once, we had almost stayed too late for dinner time; when I dismissed her, upon solemn vow to be with me on such a day, and to bring some little matters with her, which she chose not to leave behind.

I had taken her a private lodging, that upon her first elopement, her father might not find her with me; for I doubted not, but his search would begin there. It cost me above two hundred pounds in a fortnight's time, to fit her out but moderately, to appear abroad; and our whole time was one continued feast of diversion, and delight: For the fore part of the day not yielding us public amusements, we hired a coach and six; driving it may be fifteen or twenty miles, for the pleasure of enjoying ourselves over a five guinea dinner, of such things as we might have had at home, for a tythe of the expence; and upon our return, we were in proper time for the opera, plays, and some elegant entertainment at the tavern before bed time: So that no one could say, but we made the most of our time that we well could.

My six weeks drawing near to a conclusion, and together with it my eight hundred pounds; it was high time to look out for a recruit. I watched Spring-gardens every night, as narrowly as a Bailiff sets for his prey; but seven weeks, eight, nay nine weeks passed, and no chair appeared. This compelled me to feign myself as much out of order, as I was indeed out of cash; and by that means, my new mistress

and

and I had been more sparing, than (if I had appeared to have been able to have prosecuted the way of life we sat out in) I could well have been, on a sudden.



CHAP. V.

*Marries an old rich country widow.
The courtship. His pretence for ab-
sence from his mistress. Management
of absence with his wife.*

I Had not twenty pounds left, and it was now a full quarter of a year since I saw my Incognita; but (as a sort of cordial to my now subsiding spirits) it happened, that being one day at a friend's house in the city, I accidentally dined with a widow lady, who had lately buried her husband in the country, where they had lived many years; and for joy of her release, was just come to town to look into the gay part of life a little, before she made her exit; for I believed she might be about fifty eight years of age. She arrived at my friend's house but the night before, and was that afternoon to look out for lodgings at the court end of the town. This, she being
very

very full of all dinner time; I told her, that I had lived all my days about the court, and that if she pleased, I would accompany her, in search of an accommodation. She was very ready to snap at my offer, and no sooner was our meal over, than we were in motion; my friend's wife being of the party.

By the way, (for we went in her own mourning coach) I demanded what street she should choose to fix on for our first enquiry? She told me, in some one of the open airy streets, for the freedom of breathing; for close air, and foggy weather, were very disagreeable to her. I mention-Pall-mall, as both open, and near the court; but she no sooner heard the sound of it, than she burst into tears, assuring me, that the very name of it, reminding her of her dear deceased husband, who had formerly lived there, she could never enjoy herself in that street.

I ordered the coachman to drive into Bond-street, imagining that somewhere about Hanover-square, would be the most proper for her. I enquired into her family, and what conveniencies she would want; for I told her, I would step in wherever it seemed likely, and inform her

her of the propriety of the place, before she gave herself the trouble of inspecting it.

She was mighty thankful for the favour; and signified, that her family only consisted, at present, of herself (here she wept again) and five servants; and that a first floor, with a parlour below stairs, (for she said climbing a stair-case above once a day, was intollerable to her) a kitchen, and three garrets, would be sufficient for her.

We called at several places before we fixed; and at length pitched upon an excellent apartment for our purpose in Conduit-street, and took it.

I waited upon them home again, and supped, and the next day was invited to go with them to the new lodgings; and the third day I went by myself to drink tea with her.

I enquired how she liked her accommodations, and hoped, I said, that every thing about her was to her satisfaction; for that I really thought she was most happily situated. I expected some reply relating to her dwelling; but instead of that, so soon as her flux of tears would permit her to proceed; Ah! Mr. Osborn, said she, whence can a woman seek for happiness, having lost so valuable, and indulgent a husband as I have? No; felicity and

CHARLES OSBORN, *Esq*; 71

I are strangers, aliens to each other. What a melancholy time have I of it here, to eat by myself? Methinks I look for my dearest husband, to talk and prattle with me; but alas! his chair is empty; never, never more to be filled; for my poor remains of life must be lingered out in widowhood. Poor man, he left me all that was in his power, (loving soul) twelve thousand pounds in money, besides my jointure of four hundred pounds a year; but what is that without him? All, a meer imaginary nothing.

I should think, Madam, replied I, that you who have so fine a fortune, should cease to grieve at a calamity incident to human nature. Consider, yourself might have dropt, and then he had been in your circumstances.

O! No, answered she, he might have sought him out another maté, to have passed the rest of his life with, in satisfaction; for I think it very barbarous, for the living to be deprived of earthly enjoyments, for the sake of the dead. Then Madam, says I, from your own doctrines, I will condemn the sorrow that you endure for his sake. You are really (pardon me, Madam, says I, for being so bold) a very fine woman, and no doubt, have been

been excessively so; what then should debar you from the use of that remedy, which you would have prescribed for your late husband's sorrow, had he survived you?

Dear Mr. Osborn, says she (pulling up her neck) don't offer to flatter an old woman, upwards of forty years of age. Can I, think you, relish a new married life, which takes up half an age to settle the affections, and bring them to a consistence one with the other? No, no, it is too late in life for me to have these thoughts. Were I now, as I have been, I might expect my person would prove a strong engagement for an husband's love; but my bloom is gone, I am only to prepare to follow my dear husband; and wept most bitterly.

I was naturally of a compassionate temper, which had the better qualified me for sympathizing with her; and by a little help of the imagination, I did (by degrees) strain the water into my own eyes; which she observing; good soul, says she, how my affliction moves him? O Sir, no body knows but those who feel it, the torture of a fond heart, at parting from a tender husband.

Madam, said I, your distress so rouses my compassion for you; and the softness of your nature hath so wrought upon my faculties, that I am wholly captivated with your tears; and as no avoidance of the evil you are plunged into, can be obtained, but by re-instating yourself in your former happy condition; let me beg you to make me your partner in the felicity of that state; for I'll promise you, it shall be my aim to make it so; but if all my best endeavours should prove ineffectual, I will at least participate your sorrows, and weep out my whole moisture, to commix with your tears.

You are too good indeed, Mr. Osborn, replied she; but as I said before, my age must be disagreeable to so young a man as you are. What more can any man desire, Madam, said I, whether he be old, or young, than the possession of the object his heart is fixed on? And surely, Madam, a few days, under the enjoyments of the marriage-state, will make my chair as pleasing to you, as that of your late husband; for he was a man, a tender man, you say, and you had delight in his company; all which I doubt not you will soon be sensible of in me: Then why should grief enthral the heart that can be free? We sorrow but

for the loss of former comforts; then let us rejoice only for the present, and let us embrace them. You shall soon find all in me that you have already lost, as in a spring perpetually flowing with new delights.

Indeed, indeed Mr. Osborn, said she, it is well I am not a young woman, for you have a tongue that would lull an angel to sleep; but at my years it is high time to be considerate. It is what I would have you be, Madam, said I, and not give such scope to your passions, which, by degrees, will wear you away, and consume that florid red and white, that at present enamels your cheeks, to a fallow consumptive corps.

Heigh ho; said she, how pleasant is flattery! for you must excuse me, if I can't believe you, Sir. I then bolting out two or three round oaths, and extravagancies, perceived her eyes to languish, her cheek glow, her breath shorten, and her breast heave; when laying hold of the opportune crisis, I embraced her so close, that before I parted with her, I brought her to say, yes; though she jokingly replied afterwards, that it was merely by compulsion she had made the concession to me.

I stayed with her till past twelve a'clock at night, and assuring her that I would wait on her next day with a licence, which after the usual hesitations, she complied with; we then went to rummaging over her boxes, and trunks, for coloured cloaths to be married in; but agreed to keep it private, till she should have fitted out herself in proper manner, for appearing as my bride.

I had but little time to think of any thing that night, and when I returned home, was so full of confusion, that Fanny (which was the name of the draper's daughter who now lived wholly at my lodgings) took great notice of it, and could not rest till she knew the cause. I told her it was an accidental quarrel I had had in company, which I was afraid would end in a duel: for that I expected a challenge to be sent me the next morning. This almost threw her into convulsions, and much ado I had to keep life in her; till upon her knees, she made me promise to retire somewhere out of the way for a few days, that the quarrel might in the mean time be compromised.

I wanted only this, and expected what would be the consequence of my making the confession of a duel to her; so, engaging

me not to return, till matters could be accommodated, we went to bed; but having so many irons in the fire, I could deliberately strike neither; for married I must be the next morning, and I was no otherwise apprized of my wife's fortune, than by her own report; and without that I could not subsist: to this therefore every other consideration both of Fanny, and my Incognita, were compelled in some measure to give way; though I dreaded the loss of either of them, for they were both exceeding dear to me.

At peep of day, Fanny obliged me to rise, and be gone, she purposing in case of a challenge, to assure the bearer, that I was at a great distance in the country; but she begged me to write to her every day.

I was almost distracted too myself, to think that I had missed looking out for the chair the night before, (having never till then, neglected it) and thinks I, if it should have returned without me, it will be taken for such a slight on my part, as may never be forgiven.

I dressed however, and took out a licence, which I shewed to my new old lady by eleven of the clock; she (though she was really prepared as fine as hand could make her, in expectation of me) was ready to

faint at the sight of it; being sure, (she declared) that she should never be able to hold out the ceremony, her knees knocked together so: but before our departure, being prevailed upon by Chary, her waiting-woman, to take a good large glass of surfeit water, (which she also recommended to me, and I pledged her in) we made shift to get over it.

Her own coach being in mourning, we took a hack, Mrs. Chary being of the party, and in the secret; but for the world, the old lady would not have any one know it, till a proper season.

I durst not let my own servant into the mystery of where I was; so that in the evening I could not send him to watch the chair, neither could I any ways go myself, my present engagement lay so strongly upon me, not to be absent.

After supper, Mrs. Chary having taken all proper means for our good repose, shewed me her mistress's chamber, and conducted me into it; where the old lady was laid ready; but she would on no score part with Chary's hand, till I was in bed also; when Mrs. Chary dropping a curtesy, removed the light, and retired.

We were no sooner up, and had breakfasted, than my wife leading me to her

escriptore, produced from a back drawer, a whole cargoe of receipts for stock of several companies, abundance of East-India bonds, Exchequer orders, and such things as I had never before seen, nor did I well know what to do with; but amongst the rest, were three bank notes, one for eight, a second for five, and the third for three hundred pounds; two of which by their dates, were six or seven years old. I presently concluded, that they had near run their time out; so pocketing them, I desired her to lock up all the rest, telling her that it was great pity such large sums should be out of use, and that as my place required me to be in the city that morning, I would lay them out in stock, or what else my broker should advise me to be most beneficial.

My wife then desired to know what post it was I was possessed of; when I informed her, that I had a very considerable one in the Custom-house, of about seven hundred pounds a year; but it was attended with one very ill condition; which was, that sometimes I was obliged to be from home for a night or two together; but that now I had married her, I would look out for something better, and endeavour to dispose of it, as soon as possible, for I should never

never be able to be absent from her, so often as that post demanded it.

She seemed to take that proposal very kindly of me, and most lovingly embracing me, assured me, that it would break her heart to have me absent from her on nights. Thus, having trifled away an hour or more in our amorous correspondence, I took my leave for the city; but turning about at the end of the street, I observed her head out of the window, peeping after me.

I exchanged the least of my notes into money directly, and dining in the city, returned about the time I might expect the chair, if it came; but not meeting with it, I made the best of my way home to my wife. She, poor loving creature, had waited with anxious expectation a long time for me, she said; when embracing her, I seemed exceeding glad, that I had so luckily put off my stay all night; for that it was by the meekest accident imaginable, that I was able to get home to her. This I said, the better to prepare her for the elopement, I purposed to make the ensuing night, to Fanny.

I had now given over all further hopes of my Incognita; but cannot say all thoughts; for she ran in my head as much as ever, and what distressed me very much

on her account was, lest she should have died in child-bed, and I should never be able to find out the infant. I had called several times at the old lady's lodgings, but they could give no account of her; and I had no where else to enquire at.

I stayed best part of that day at home; but in the afternoon, I told my wife, that I must go to my post, lest any ships should have arrived in my absence, and that I was not without hopes of returning, but begged her not to stay up past eleven o'clock for me.

Having given my wife an opiate for that night, I steered to my own lodgings; for having met with so many disappointments, I did not think worth while to look for the chair. Poor Fanny no sooner heard my tread upon the stairs, but she ran to me with excess of joy, to tell me there had been no challenge sent, and welcomed me home with all imaginable tenderness; but I told her, I knew more of the matter than she did, for the quarrel was very far from being made up; and that I only stole the opportunity of that night with her, while my friends were to be busy upon the affair, at a meeting they were to have upon it; by which I was certain, that whatever their success might be, nothing would be done as to the challenge, till the next morning.

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But Fanny, says I, my absence has been of very unlooked for advantage to me, for the nobleman I supped with the first night I left you, having intelligence of a place at the Custom-house falling into his gift, of seven or eight hundred pounds a year, immediately made me a compliment of it. Indeed, says I, it requires more attendance than I can well spare time from you for, being four nights at least in the week; but however, as it is so fine a thing, there was no refusing it.

Poor Fanny was so far from rejoicing at this news, that the tears stood in her eyes at the report: And will you keep it my dear, says she? I told her, there were many reasons obliging me to it; as first, says I, a refusal will be an absolute affront to his Lordship, in whose power it is to serve me much further; then, says I, though the salary is no more than I have mentioned, yet the perquisites, I am told, will double the post; and let me tell thee Fanny, fifteen, or sixteen hundred pounds a year, will buy many pretty things, child; I have thoughts of bespeaking you a chariot forthwith; we shall live like crowned heads, my love, with this addition to my fortune.

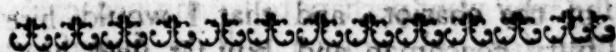
The hopes of this glittering figure, (I observed) dried up Fanny's tears; and she

desired she might have the fancying of the chariot; and that I would hire a lusty coachman and buy fat sleek horses; for that she had as lief ride in a sand cart, as with poor cattle, and a sniveling coachman, in the best chariot in the world.

I commended her taste, and assured her, that it suiting perfectly with my own sentiments, it should be accordingly; and by this means, I never heard any further complaint of the absence my post occasioned.

Thus did I divide my time, between my wife and mistress, very agreeably; for having by this time procured all my wife's securities to be transferred into my own name, I had set up a handsome equipage for Fanny, and my own coach being out of mourning, and my wife decked in her colours, few people lived in a grander manner than myself.





CHAP. VI.

*Has now a wife, and two mistresses.
Death of his first wife. Is reduced.
Marries a grocer's widow; and a
vintner's widow. Meets both his
wives at the play. How he escapes
from them. Flies for fear of his two
wives.*

IT was full three months after my marriage, when as I was looking out of my dining-room window one evening, just after drinking tea with Fanny, I spied my old lady, looking up at the houses as she came along (as I apprehended) to find out my lodging; and she being now pretty near to the door; Fanny, says I, retire immediately, here is an old aunt of mine, that has not paid me a visit a long time, just going to knock at the door, and you must not be seen for the world.

She was running into the bed-chamber, which opened into the dining-room; Hold, hold, says I, (fearing we might have some discourse not so proper for her to hear) go

into the maid's room, three pair of stairs, she may want perhaps to see my bed-chamber, for old women will be inquisitive. But Fanny had scarce time to quit me, before the old lady entered. I (feigning not to know of her coming) pressed towards her, saluted her, led her to a chair, and all impatience, demanded, What news from my Incognita?

Mr. Osborn, says she, I but very lately expected to be the messenger of any thing good to you; your poor lady has been at death's door. O Madam, says I, torture me not. Is she recovered? She replied, she was. I am content, said I, now pray proceed.

Soon after we last saw you, we retired into the country, where she had taken a lodging to lie in at; but the hour being come, surely, no poor creature ever had so miserable a time of it; and indeed, I had given her over then; but she brought a lovely boy to light, who is as fine a child as ever was born; (and living? said I,) it is, answered she; but, your poor lady languished so from day to day, that there was not the least hopes of her getting over it. And truly, Mr. Osborn, said she, I must tell you, that even in the weak condition she was reduced to, you ran more in her head than

than her prayers. We had all the advice which the country would afford, and several physicians from London; till being able to do no more, they refused to come again: When a poor nurse in the town, having heard her case, offered her service, if not too late for her relief. She saw her, examined me as to her condition, and in three weeks, by the medicines she applied, wrought a perfect cure upon her. I would have persuaded her, added she, to have stayed a month longer in the country, for the establishment of her health; but no entreaties could prevail, so soon as she perceived herself to be in a condition of being safely removed to you.

What with the melancholy rehearsal of my Incognita's illness, the occasion of it, and the affection she had expressed for me; my heart was so melted, that it flowed in rivers down my cheeks; which the old lady observing, I am sorry to see you so discomposed, said she, but all is over. Come, clear up again, you shall see her this evening, you can't shed more tears on her account, than she has on yours, I can assure you.

The old lady would afford me her company no longer, than just to be spectator of the satisfaction I received from her message;

sage; when taking her leave, she desired me to remember ten o'clock; for the days were now so long, it was almost light at nine.

When Fanny returned, I acquainted her, that I must go upon some business of my aunt's; would call at my office, and if I possibly could, would be with her in the evening; but I had been so long used to staying out, that she did not expect me till she saw me.

I had now a wife, and two mistresses on my hands, which one would judge to be sufficient employ, for any reasonable man breathing; especially as I was obliged to be so much upon my guard, as not to suffer the least word to escape me, without weighing first, how far it was proper for the company I was in; for what was so in one, was not so in another; and had I not been scrupulously exact in that, I had been blown.

It happened somewhat luckily, that I had lain at home the night before, for as my Incognita usually detained me two nights, I should have had my old wife enquiring for me at the Custom-house, had I been absent from her a day or two before, as I might have been with Fanny, but the hour being come, and the chair

waiting

waiting, I soon found myself in my old parlour; and indeed, much sooner than I had ever done before. Now, I had ever suspected, that the chairmen had carried me backwards and forwards, merely to amuse me, that I might not know whereabouts I was; but having forgot what method they used to take with me, after so long a recess, I am sure, they set me down in little above ten minutes; so that I was satisfied my Incognita could not live so far off, as I had before been made to believe.

Being landed, I passed through the usual ceremonies, and upon the first prospect of her shadow, I ran to meet it; when placing my lips against the curtain, I there met her's; but cursed the impediment which parted us. I begged to hear from her own mouth, the state of her health, being sincerely grieved for her illness; which, she said, she had reason to believe I was; but being so well recovered again, she hoped we might have still many years of enjoyment to come. We supped as usual, and I longing to hear all that had befallen her; she stayed not long afterwards, before we retired.

She told me, that my son was a very promising child, and that it was almost death

death to her to part from it; neither could she have done it, on any other account, than for the sake of its father. I entreated her, to let me see it, but she fearing some discovery, put it off from time to time, promising me, that when it was big enough to run alone, the old lady should bring it with her, to pay me a visit.

I stayed my two nights as usual, and the second morning put me in cash a thousand pounds; but as it had been commonly Sunday and Monday nights that I had spent there, and she telling me that the chair should wait next Sunday; I begged with her leave to exchange the days, for Monday and Tuesday, as more convenient for me. This she readily agreed to; and indeed, if she had not, I know not how I should have come off at home; for my old wife would scarce have been persuaded, that my post had required constant attendance on Sundays.

Having so well settled the time of intercourse with my Incognita, my other five days were divided between my wife and Fanny, but my wife was sure of Wednesday and Sunday at least.

I have often reflected, that it would have puzzled some people, to have kept so nice a balance in their amours as I did; and yet
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this trade continued for almost seven years, without the least suspicion, or interruption.

Fanny, soon after my last visit to my Incognita, declared herself breeding, and in proper time brought me a girl to my boy; and in due time, my Incognita brought me another, so that in seven years I had thirteen children, boys and girls; but as for my poor wife, I could make nothing of her; for we had not been married two years, before an old sore in her leg broke out, and confined her to the house, not being able to hang it downwards; and in the seventh year of our nuptials, she departed.

It was very happy, both for her and myself, that she had lived no longer; for her money was brushed off, even to the last hundred pounds, just before her death; and her jointure died with her; so that I was at even hands with her, when she had left the world, and all the benefit I had reaped from her was, only my keeping, and Fanny's, in vast superfluity, and extravagance, during her life-time.

I sold my coach, furniture, jewels and goods she had left behind her, for about eight hundred pounds; and that, (which would go but a little way in maintaining Fanny and me, at our common rate,)

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together with the liberal benefactions of my Incognita, was now all that I had to depend upon; but though my receipt from her, besides extraordinary presents, was a hundred pound^r a month, yet that fell far short of my expences, and frequently, I had lived upon six, or more months credit; so that each month's pay being appropriated, some months before it was received, I had scarce ever five pounds in my pocket.

This grew such a burthen upon my mind, that (as Fanny must be supported at all events, being most dear to me) I projected a second marriage, with a tobaccoist's widow; and upon pretence of being a man of great fortune, (as who could have thought less, that was not a stranger to the figure I had made for some years) carried her. She had about seven thousand pounds, but I can't say I ever had any great stomach to her, and I believe she was too sensible, not to perceive it. My place at the Custom-house still supplied me with excuses of absence from her too; but I had not been engaged to her above two years before a vintner (at whose house I had drank many a bottle, and spent many a hundred pounds) tipped off, leaving his widow behind him in possession of fifteen thousand pounds.

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CHARLES OSBORN, *Esq*; 91

I had been used to the house from my youth, and always having behaved in the politest manner to his wife, she was much delighted with my company. I frequently dined at their own table, behind the bar; and for several years I had jokingly called myself her second. This lady, I say, being a widow of about fifty, (but as large as any two moderate wives) I made my addresses to now, in earnest; but insisted upon her quitting the tavern, and settling in the country, as my place at the Custom-house, (which I had long talked of as a reality) would not require my attendance much, save at particular times.

Well, in short, I married her too; settled her in the country, and was at all events bound to sacrifice some of my time to her; but I was obliged to keep touch with my other wife, and Fanny too; so that now pretending that my business requiring me in this country, then in that, for a week or ten days; I had seldom more than two of them who expected me in the way at once; for I never in my life disappointed my Incognita.

Though I exceedingly loved Fanny, yet she sorely perplexed me; for she had by this time given so far into the publick diversions, and gaieties of life, (I never hav-

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ing given a check to her) that she would have confounded twenty thousand pounds a year, could she have gotten it.

My vintner, about this time, coming to town with me for two or three days from Isleworth, where we then lived, to visit a relation in Covent Garden; I made my return into the country, for somewhat that I wanted there, a pretence for spending a night or two with Fanny; (for my tobacconist did not expect me in town some days yet.) In the evening, Fanny and I prepared to regale ourselves with a play, and sat in the boxes, as we always did. It happened, that my vintner's relations had treated her that evening, at the same house; and some neighbours had made a party with my tobacconist there too; where all sat in the pit. There being a very full box, and the pit and gallery being prodigiously crowded, it was with some difficulty that we could get out, after waiting a long time; but I had no sooner stepped out of the box myself, and had given my hand to Fanny, than my vintner clapped me on one shoulder, and my tobacconist on the other. Hey day! says the vintner, is this your going out of town to day, Mr. Osborn? Says the tobacconist, I did not expect you in town this week, my dear; methinks, when you

you came, you might as well have taken me to a play, once in your life, as any young gypsie of them all. Pray Madam, says my vintner, do you know this gentleman? Know him, Madam, says she? not know my husband? Fanny and I were all this while pushing between them, (for I took no more notice, than if it had been the first time I had ever seen either of them) but they stood so before us, that it was impossible. Your husband? replied my vintner, you scandalous trollop, your husband? and brushing up, as if she would have devoured her, we whipped by, and with all imaginable celerity, stepping into the chariot, drove off as fast as possible; but not before we had heard my vintner call out, Mr. Osborn, Mr. Osborn, this creature says she is your wife. I feigned a laugh (as well as ever I could) as we were driving home, to prevent Fanny's suspicion of me. What a couple of noisy strumpets, says I, were these? did you ever hear such abusive creatures? thinking by that means to have carried it off; but I quickly perceived, that Fanny had taken it in another light. My dear, says she, you seem to be very much diverted; but for my part, I am almost frightened out of my wits. Pray which of those ladies is your

your wife? or are they both so? for they seemed to claim equal right to you; for my part, added she, crying, I never suspected you to be a married man before. Oh, what will become of me, and the six poor infants?

I was so confounded at what she said, that day light would presently have discovered my hypocrisy; but being in the chariot, and in the dark, I mustered up the best of my courage; Fanny, says I, what is the meaning of this? are you bewitch'd? why? they did not speak to me; it was to a man that stood by them. I know not who they spoke to, replied she, but they both clapped you on the back; both looked in your face; both called you my dear, and husband, and Mr. Osborn; if these are not signs enough of their knowledge of you, and that it was you they meant, I know not what is. Oh! I shall go distracted! have I cohabited all this while with another woman's husband? who perhaps has more children by you than I have, and are they to inherit what you have, and mine to be vagabonds? I can never survive this.

Madam, replied I, very sternly, it is most fitting that I should be silent, till you are pleased to have finished your raving no doubt; but pray why this charge upon

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me? why this blubbering, and noise? if you are weary of me, you might have taken a proper time and place to have informed me of it. Remember, you have given me offence, and shall repent it.

By this time, we had stopped at my lodgings, when stepping out myself, being nearest to the door, I ordered the coachman to wait, and then passed along up stairs, without taking any notice of her. I went to my beaureau, took out what cash I had there, and calling for my footman, ordered him down stairs with several suits of cloaths, and my night gown, and was myself following him, with full purpose never more to return: But Fanny, who had pursued me up stairs, and seen what I had been doing, falling upon my neck, entertained me in such a moving manner, not to leave her, that my heart relenting again, I ordered my cloaths back, and sent the coach to my stables; having a desire of taking one more night's consideration before I acted; my pillow being the place, whereon I had brought most of my schemes to perfection.

We looked very shy upon each other till bed time; when Fanny, imagining that she had me safe, clasped me to her, and labouring with the weight that oppressed her mind,

mind, most passionately beseeched me, to reveal the whole truth to her; for let it turn which way it would, she said, that, and that only, could alleviate her distraction.

Finding that matters were brought to such a crisis, that it would be impossible long to conceal them. Fanny, says I, when you first engaged your heart to me, I was a bachelor, and have ever since continued such in affection, and only yours; but you are not insensible, that my regard for you, has been attended with prodigious expence; now, so long as I could by any possible means support it, (as I perceived it delighted you) I continued; nay increased it. I own my folly in not apprizing you of my circumstances sooner; and doubt not, but if I had, your prudence would have reduced your desires within their compass, but fondness of you, and the lust of preventing your every wish, urged me on, by your gratification, to my own undoing. You have lightly passed by the sums which have been expended upon you, as matters of small moment; but when I shall raise my computation to upwards of forty thousand pounds, you will not cease to stand astonished at it.

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I then informed her of my first marriage, with the fortune I had with my wife; also of both the last, and what I had with them; of which, I assured her, my last wife the vintner, had not three thousand pounds left, which was so secured to her, that I could not touch it; and these sums Fanny, said I, are all gone to indulge you, in every desire that I could but conceive you would frame. And now child, if you can but reduce your inclination to such as I can afford you, what is left, shall be still yours, so long as it is mine; but if you rather choose to provide for yourself, I will leave with you all my furniture, and ready money, and take my chance by myself; for I must be private, lest my two wives should by any means get scent of my abode, and prosecute me.

Surely, never was so moving a scene as this, between Fanny and me; there was real love on both sides, fear, anguish, doubt, and all the passions incident to man, (but hate) then stirring between us. We both wept, till we could weep no more, and horrid silence but revealed our woes, and rendered them the more tormenting; at length, when I mentioned rising, she extracted a promise from me, not to desert her in her distress, but to inform her

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wheresoever it went, that as in life, so in death she might share equal fate with me.



CHAP. VII.

Visits his Incognita. She relates the scuffle between him and his wives. Retires. His wives search after him. Goes to settle at Boston with Fanny, and her children. His reflections.

THE night of my parting with Fanny, being that wherein I was to meet my Incognita, when I was morally certain, according to custom, of receiving one hundred pounds, being my monthly allowance; I gave Fanny my purse before I went out, in which was about forty guineas, telling her, that as I should possibly be some few days before I fixed on any certain asylum, I would either write to her when I had, or see her again, if I should not fix on one.

You may believe it was a heavy parting between us, but cannot conceive every extravagant action that accompanied it, nor am I at present capable of describing them; but

but we parted, and I entering my chair, was conducted to my Incognita.

After supper, the old lady having left the room; amidst our pleasant passages, as we were both very sharp upon each other, in a decent, but jocular manner; Mr. Osborn, says my Incognita, I was afraid I should have lost you last night, among the contending parties; but you stuck close to the delight of your heart I perceived, and left 'em in the lurch. This was the only time, I can say, that I was ever beholden to the curtain; for it concealed that confusion, which otherwise must have betrayed me.

Madam, replied I, surely it cannot be fair for you to have the advantage of sight, whilst I remain in the dark thus. Did you hear the squabble then? I did, said she, and observed, that while two wives were contending for the husband, a third run away with him; and at that she laughed immoderately. I own, replied I, that I had a young lady, a relation, at that time by the hand; but believe you mistake as to their dispute about me; for if you observed, there was another gentleman behind me. There was so, says she, and he staid with the combatants, as I myself did, till the scuffle ended. They both then cried out, what! is Mr. Osborn gone? which

100 MEMOIRS of

way went he? And that question they would scarce have asked, had the gentleman then in their view, and of whom they demanded it, been the Mr. Osborn they were fighting for; but these are no affairs of mine, I had only a mind to rally you upon it.

Dear Madam, said I, what else might they say? for as I was out of their hearing, it might be somewhat prejudicial to me. A trifle, replied she; only insisted that you was married to 'em both, and had spent their fortunes upon your mistresses. I think, the fattest said, she brought you fifteen thousand pounds, and had scarce a shift left to her back; but now she found how it was with you, she should take great delight, in seeing you upon your travels to Tyburn, whither she would send you, if all the little she had left, would procure you a passport. These, said she, were some of the tokens of their affection, amongst several others, that they vented upon you; for I must needs say, you seemed to be highly in their esteem.

Oh the benefit of this dear curtain, thinks I, or I had been undone; then joining her in the laugh she was carrying on, I cannot for my life conceive, says I, what the women were both thinking of? unless they
took

took me for some other man. Come, come. Mr. Osborn, replied she, if I had been as jealous as they were, I fear, I might with equal reason have joined in the fray: but however, this may be a disagreeable subject; let us call another. I hope you conducted the young lady safe home? I answered, that I did. I suppose, says she, your cousin lodges in the same house that you do. I was too much put to it then, to know what to say, but hesitating, replied, no. Nay, being your cousin, if she lay there last night, there could be no harm in it, says she, for surely a man may lye with his own cousin, without offence to any one: but I have now done, and I hope you take nothing ill, that I have said in a private way, for I'll assure you, it was not with a view of offending.

The old lady returning we fell upon other discourse, and I heard no more of it; but the plot of my two wives against me, would not quit my mind; for though I mattered not the tobacconist, yet I had experienced the vintner, to be the Devil himself, when she set upon mischief.

Before I rose the second morning, my Incognita gave me a piece of advice; which was, not to trust myself within the reach of either of those exasperated women; for be-

lieve me, said she, by what I heard, they will be too many for you.

It seemed to me as if my Incognita had foreseen she should hear no more of me; for instead of the hundred pounds, as I had usually received on the first Tuesday in every month, she had now ordered me five hundred, which was a very opportune supply, in my then present condition.

The news my Incognita had told me, of what had happened between my two wives, after I had left them, lay rankling on my mind, in all its most horrid figures; neither durst I return to Fanny, or to either of them; for as yet my neck was not brought to the temper of an halter. I longed either for a full confirmation of their mischievous intentions, or to know their dispositions towards making it up with me; but could fix on no means to be assured of either; neither durst I apply to them myself, or attempt returning to Fanny, lest they should have found my haunt; but still not doubting of her affection for me, I retired to a bagnio in Covent-garden, from whence I wrote her a letter, wherein I begged her to employ some trusty confident, who might apply to each of my wives for the knowledge of where I was, as upon some matter of vast importance, which must
needs

needs be immediately communicated to me, and that I would send to her the next night for an answer; for I durst not even trust Fanny with the place of my secretion, my fears sat so heavy upon me.

I was in no distrust of the messenger's discovering my abode to Fanny, having been often before (on such occasions) confirmed in the steadiness of their attachment to their employer; as none but the most artful, and ignorant fellows are proper for such employment. Ignorant, I mean, through artifice, of every thing they are not particularly licenced to disclose, for as they scarce ever move but upon an intrigue, they are perfect masters of their calling.

Fanny ordered the fellow to wait, and then brought him an answer to my letter in writing (he told me); but said, that he declined receiving it, assuring the lady, that as I had only delivered him his message in the street, he never expected to see me again; till upon her strong solicitation, he at length took it, with pretence, that if by accident I should fall into his way, he would deliver it.

I was all impatience to hear what my dear Fanny would say to me; and having dismissed the messenger, upon opening it, read the following words.

My ever dear life,

THE distress your absence hath given me, (being but too sensible of the melancholy occasion of it) is inconceivable: Nor was it capable of aggravation, but from a set of the vilest looking fellows upon earth, breaking into my chamber yesterday morning, whilst I was in bed; whose rudeness and violence in search of you were intolerable. The poor children, not to mention myself, were reduced to a state of stupefaction, expecting to be murdered every moment; nor are either of us yet re-instated in our pristine composure. There was one fellow amongst them (I presume their leader) who was so impertinent, as to run his arm into my bed, and but with difficulty, was restrained from stripping off the cloaths to find you. He stormed, and swore that he was satisfied you was in the house; but if not, and you was alive, he would have you, though he pursued you round the whole globe. In this condition, my dear, is your loving Fanny; but how kind had you been, to have let me know where I could have seen you; for surely, if you can't trust me, you must be without a true friend indeed. I shall send as you desire, to those barbarous creatures your wives; but
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from what has already happened, believe it will be productive of no good. Let me on my knees entreat you, my dear, to signify where you are, by the messenger you send me to-morrow, or I shall go distracted.

F. K.

I was now but too certain, what effect her message to my wives would have; and relinquishing all further prospect of advantage from my Incognita, and the hopes of continuing about town, I projected a tour into the country, at some such distance, as might render me unsuspected, and easy; but then Fanny was not to be left behind; and six children were an heavy burthen, to a man whose heart was already overflowing with other cares.

There was but little owing for my lodging, and no great matter due to servants; and as I had effects of considerable value there; I, by the messenger I sent to Fanny, at night, wrote her orders, to sell every thing to some broker, pay the lodgings and servants off, and for herself and children, to come the next night to the Boston stage-coach, in Aldersgate-street, to set out with it the following morning, when I would meet her at Ware, and proceed for the remainder of the journey with her.

assured her I had bespoke the whole coach, and that a chariot waited to carry me to Ware that night, upon the return of her answer, from which I was but too positive, I should meet with small encouragement for altering my resolution.

She sent me word in return, to proceed with all expedition; and that, having executed my commands, she would be with me at the time appointed.

I had no sooner settled matters thus, than I bespoke a chariot for next morning, and before day-light, set out for Ware, where I arrived by eleven o'clock, sent back the chariot, and lodged that night at the crown. Having the whole evening before me, I could not but reflect on mankind in general, and particularly on the transactions of my own past life; under what a charming prospect I had at first set out in it; the advantages I had had to improve my faculties, and my own strenuous application of these advantages; what a scene of woe the neglect of my father's properly depositing his will, had introduced me to; my surprising elevation from that low ebb, by the chaste love (as I might call it) of my *Incognita*; the calamity I had brought upon the draper's family; my deceitful progress with my first wife, and ruin of my two pre-

present ; with the utter subversion of all my own future hopes, and the destruction of Fanny, and her children : And all this, says I, before I am thirty years of age.

What a deluge of woe have I let in upon myself ! says I ; and what a scene of villainy, and hypocrisy have I ran through ! and yet without any natural inclination, or predisposition to vice ; which hath ever been, and still is utterly abhorrent from my constitution, and serious inclination ; what then can have spurred me on, not only to the ruin of others, but to the subjecting of myself to the ignominy of the gallows, from which I am now flying with such horror and precipitation ! but reflection distracts me !

O Fanny, my heart's delight, thou hast undone me ! But is there no retraction ! No escape ! No. The mystery of iniquity is so impenetrable at first onset, that men discover not its deformity, till they are so entangled in its process, that the danger of an escape becomes too considerable to be attempted ! What had I to do with Fanny, at the expence of her family's peace, and her own honour ! at a time too, when I was under the strictest obligations of constancy to my Incognita ! Nor had I prosecuted my amour with her, had she not laid

the temptation in my way, by her wife; for possibly I had then thought no more of her, at least, of the maintaining her, in the manner I have done.

O vice! thou inroacher, upon the least admission, why didst thou plunge me so deep in ill, before awakened from thy lethargic influence! But it is apparent to me now, that one wrong step draws such a fatal chain of consequences behind it, as are never, never to be removed, but by the last, and worst of all remedies, a broken heart, and death.

O that I had lived and died with thee, my Incognita! and that I had done, but for thy own generosity! The affluence thou furnished'st me with, insnared me into methods of disposing it; and the recess from thee, afforded me an opportunity for it. What a cursed life have I led, since I first broke through the fetters of gratitude, which for ever ought to have linked me to thee! Damned slip! at first, with thee Fanny, now my sole remaining solace; if amazing shame confounds not, and appals each taste of future wished enjoyment with thee! for with what face can I, as heretofore, clasp in my longing arms thy snowy breast, from henceforth fraught with pangs intollerable, of what thou hast been,
and

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and what next must be, (if any torture lurks within thy bosom, at possessing me,) but why this doubt of that I can't thou, fond mother, behold six children, bleating their plaints into thy tender ears for food, for raiment, and remain unmoved, at such a spectacle! Thou must be stone to endure the rack of this, and not complain. To whom then wilt thou seek! To me! to me, unable to redress thy woes, o'er press myself with decuple proportion, both of my own, and thy calamity!

O had I died, when first my perjur'd faith (regardless of the double claim that my Incognita, and Fanny both had to me) made me the country widow's spouse! No innocents had then suffered for my sake; Fanny in all probability (myself being unable to have supported her) had been again received by her father, and my Incognita would not have had the same charge against me, as now she has. My injured widow's fortune had gone in its proper channel, and all had been well in regard to her: A fortune raised by rapine cannot last; it wants the blessing to be prosperous. But to support my former affluence, could nothing less than two deluded women be sacrificed at once, to gratify me! With what? Why? what I wanted not, an overplus, that

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that made me miserable in its consumption: Yet, while the world would last, could my frame have endured, obtaining fresh acquests, by any means, though e're so vile, I fear my crimes had multiplied to millions, e're one thought had been cast backwards, to produce reflection; for that, and only that, could have reduced me to a reasonable creature.

Alas! alas! how far is that day off! while sailing in the yielding streams of pleasure, (no ruffled sea to raise a dread of shipwreck) and pompous pride, the vessel smoothly glides with easy pace, her passengers serene, in sportive smiles blessing the sweet conveyance: But let the north his sable curtain spread, big with a tempest, ev'ry passion stirs; death, wrinkled death gapes fore and aft, the vessel; dismay'd with fear, and labouring with anguish, All's lost, they cry; and for the last resort, fly to that quondam stranger, providence, for succour, when merged beneath the reach of human remedy.

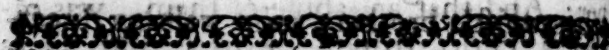
This, this is now my case, and fain I would lift up my thoughts to that august observer of all things, as in old times when first my mother taught me to know that the gifts of fortune are not ours, only to make us riot in excess; but to be employed

ployed in a worthy and commendable manner; And that an abuse of them, was rather a curse, than a blessing; but all is flint within; nor can I look on my deserted state, but in abhorrence of the arm that caused it.

The next day brought Fanny and her children; but now their number shocked me: For in the way of life that I was in, wholly upon the spend, without any means of encreasing the store, I was sensible it would soon be reduced to nothing. However, Fanny being somewhat joyous at sight of me again, I for a while dispelled the gloom that had possessed me, and assumed all the gaiety I was master of.

She informed me how she had disposed of the goods, and that she had brought me an hundred and seventy pounds (besides the money I had left with her) after clearing our lodgings and servants; and I have collected, said I, from the profits of my post in arrears, (for I durst not hint at my Incognita) five hundred pounds; so that I am in hopes, by settling in some frugal way, that we shall be just able to live, till something turns out to our advantage; she hoped we should, she said, and seemed very alert upon it.

MEMOIRS of



CHAP. VIII.

Sees one of his wife's brothers at Boston. Flies. Is stopped at Mansfield for a Highwayman. Arrives at Chester without money. Gets in debt with his landlady. Courts her. Pretence to go to London.

I Shall not trouble my reader with the occurrences of the road; but inform him, that we arrived fast at Boston; where having lain at an inn some few nights, we afterwards took a little house of eleven pounds a year, which happening to have a close belonging to it, induced me, in a short time, to keep a horse; for I must own that the indolent way of life I was in, by no means agreed with my constitution. We drilled on two years, or thereabouts, here and though we had by no means proved extravagant in our expences, yet we had not much above three hundred pounds left.

One day, as I was at an inn in the town, sitting by the kitchen fire, about noon

who

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who should alight from his horse, but my tobaccoist's brother, who walking directly into the kitchen, and turning his back to the fire, stood then close at my elbow. I thought, he seemed to eye me very much; then of a sudden, stepping forward, I must go and speak to the hostler, says he, about my horse; and went out.

It darted at once into my head, that he was gone for a constable to secure me; so paying for half a pint of wine, I then had before me, I slipped out at the back-door, went home, saddled my horse, and having no more time than to tell Fanny, that my wife's brother was at the inn, away I rode for my life, without once stopping, or even looking behind me, till I came to Mansfield; by which time it had been dark above an hour.

I had no sooner trotted into the inn yard, and (calling the hostler) delivered him my horse, but I enquired for my lodging, and was conducted to it by the waiter, whom I had ordered to bring me a glass of wine, and a crust; but before he could return, eight or ten fellows entering my room, seized me, and insisted on my going before a magistrate.

My guilty conscience immediately pointing out my accusers, I did not offer at that
oppos-

opposition, which had I known myself perfectly innocent I should have done; so that I very readily arose, and permitted myself to be ushered in before his worship. I heard not one word of my accusation all the way; but being fully persuaded that it was my wife's brother who had set me, gave myself up for a dead man.

The first word that his worship said to me was; So, Sir, now I think we have caught you, and shall put an end to your progress. I was just about to submit myself, and as a gentleman to beg all the favourable treatment the nature of confinement would admit of; when, where is the gentleman that was robbed, says his worship? Why don't he appear, and give information against this highwayman? My heart danced within me at these words and no man ever exulted more at being made an alderman, than I did, that I was taken for no other than a highwayman.

May it please your worship, said I, it is not six minutes since I alighted at an inn hard by, from off a journey; but for what intent or purpose I have been riotously halled hither before you, I am as much stranger as the child unborn.

Innocent! no doubt, said his worship; and I never had a fellow before me yet, that was

not so; if his own word might have been taken; but come, where is the gentleman? I can't wait here all night; why his mittimus might have been signed by this time. Where is he? Let him come forward.

Pray Sir, replied I, for whom is this mittimus to be made that you are speaking of? Here, clerk, says he, take down his name; What? do you take me for a con- siderer, to tell you who it is for, before I know your name? I was then asked by the clerk, with an audible voice, what my name was: I answered, John Jones. John Jones! said the justice, smiling, why all the fellows that are committed in our county in a year, are either Smiths or Jones's: a very ready name; but hanging- suspicious, I'll promise you.

By this time, the person who had been robbed appeared, with a vast posse after him: Sir, says the justice, is a magistrate upon duty, to wait your leisure, till you are pleased to attend him? What have you to say against this man? The gentleman, when looking me in the face, I have nothing to say against him, replied he. What? said his worship, have not you been robbed? Is not this the man that committed it? To Sir, answered he, it was quite another sort of a person, both in face, and make. what

what was he brought before me for, replied his worship? Who was he that did it? At this, the hostler stepping forward, begged the justice's pardon, and said, that the report of the robbery coming just then into the inn, and my horse being almost in a foam, he had a shrewd suspicion that it was me who had done it. But he had no intent of taking me up, till he had enquired further; but that mentioning it in the kitchen, some country fellows were forced into my room, and brought me. His worship then observing me to look like a gentleman (as he pleased to tell me), said he was very sorry he had not used me with more respect; but hoped I would leave him, and also the poor fellow, who had not acted in, though he had occasion for the inconvenience I had suffered by my restraint.

I made my compliments to the justice and party robbed, and assured them that it was my opinion, the men had done what became them; for that it was better one innocent person should be put to death, than that a guilty one should escape. So taking my leave of the justice, the plundered gentleman and I, spent the evening together at my inn, very pleasantly.

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I set out early the next morning, crossing the country to Leek, where I dined, and that night lay at Chester; but though I was now above an hundred miles from my family, yet I could not avoid myself; my place could never return till I was a new man, and all my difficulties removed. That time seemed to be at a great distance; but when I had set out so unprovided for a journey, that I had not been a week at Chester, more I became apprehensive that my remaining cash would not support me home again, (for I had rather to have dined upon bread in a forest, than not have behaved exactly, at whatever inn I came to) nor to find any way of supplying myself with a horse; but being wholly undetermined in my mind what course to take, or whither to go, and finding my person free at Chester, I remained there till I had exhausted my little. I then sold my horse for seven pounds, which had cost me thirteen guineas; and being yet had but one shirt to my back, I bought two more, and a pair of shoes; I then in private lodgings, where I not only lay but dined. As no man knew how to behave politely than myself, I frequented all the public places; but was under great concern that I could afford no better

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better habited; for though I had on a very fresh superfine cloth coat, and breeches yet my waistcoat, (which was an old black velvet one) was very much unpiled before and made but a scurvy appearance; for which reason, having procured a parcel of showy gold lace, at an easy rate, I edged with that, and then cut a very tolerable figure.

My landlady, who had been bred a gentlewoman, but was then under misfortune through the wasteful disposition of her late husband, was as polite a woman as most were, with no small share either of beauty or good humour; and as I was sensible must soon have occasion to benefit myself by the latter, I was more than ordinarily respectful to her; and always, though I had several ladies boarders in the house, paid the greatest deference to her; and I went for a gentleman who was looking out for a purchase of two or three hundred a year in the country in order to settle those parts, (for I had made it my business to be particularly inquisitive, in all companies, after somewhat that would suit me) and a young widower, I believe she made but little doubt that she should catch me.

It was now, more than ever, my business to keep that spirit warm in her; for having been two months in her house, with

out payment, (it being usual for others to pay every Saturday night) I was telling her that I must send to London for bills, or I should be run a-ground. I have been out, and I, in search of some agreeable situation these six months, travelling through several of the northern and western counties; but have not met with any place yet, so delightful as Chester; and think it very hard, that wherever I disliked the place, I might have been accommodated with seats, and an estate about them; so in this, which for more reasons than one, I should choose to fix at, and which has such inducements to my stay, that I cannot decline, I should be able to meet with no such thing, gives me great disquiet.

She told me, she did not doubt, but that in a little time I should hear of somewhat to my liking; for that estates were daily passing hands, from one to another, in the neighbourhood; but that I need be under no concern in her house, or in any haste for committances, for that I was intirely free, not to pay till I left it.

O sweet lady, says I, that word has a pleasing sound to my ears; left it, did you say? No, I must leave that and life together, if I can't prevail on you to quit it at the same time. In short, widow, says I, you

you have stolen my heart, and I have no power to leave you, or stir from this place till you will make me happy with you in a better. I purpose to buy about three hundred pounds a year, or four hundred, if it should so happen that it pleases me; and then possessing that, and thee, what further wish can any man have in this world?

The widow now began to think her business as good as done, and I could plainly discover ever after, such a vein of cheerfulness accompany all her behaviour to me as she was unable to hide; for from that time I kept equal pace between my courtship and search for an estate; nor was the widow deficient in her enquiries, wherever she came; and before a year was expired she had the honour to advance me above fifty pounds, to prevent me the difficulty of remittances from London.

My heart could not all this while rest (you may imagine) without frequent reflections on Fanny, and my children; but what gave me a very sensible satisfaction on their account was, that about this time being visiting one day, where a young lady was, who lately came from Boston; some of the company were admiring her household gear, both for the elegance of the taste and excellency of the workmanship: Up

their enquiry where she had it, she replied, that she bought it of one Mrs. Osborn at Boston, a Milliner, who I'll assure you, says she, has one of the prettiest fancies in England; but poor woman, added she, though she has lived exceeding gay, yet she has undergone great misfortunes, and what now afflicts her most is, the loss of her husband, having six children left upon her hands; but she has mighty pretty business, from all the neighbouring gentry, and will live very well by it, I don't doubt.

I had gone by the name of Cater, ever since my arrival at Chester; but the sound of my proper appellation, and the application of it to Fanny too, brought to mind a train of reflections, no ways proper to be indulged in company; for which reason I withdrew, and left them.

Having it from such good hands, that Fanny was so well settled, I declined further thoughts of returning to her, as I before intended, and enlarged my views to some other enterprizes.

There was a young lady, who lived about seven miles from Chester, whose grandmother being lately dead, had left her near five thousand pounds; and she being one with whom I had danced, and thereby gained some familiarity at the as-

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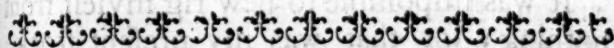
sembly;

fembly; I resolved to make a bold stroke, and attempt to marry her; for she was not above nineteen, and entirely mistress of herself: but then (though I had been exceedingly cautious in the use of them) my cloaths made but a very bad shew, and if I should in my first visit give her a distaste to me, all that I could ever do afterwards (I was afraid) might never recover it.

It was impossible to new rig myself from nothing; for that was my present stock; and where to seek for a penny, I could not imagine, having drained my widow landlady, till I had got above fifty pounds in her books, above my lodging, and board. Finding I say that no more could arise from thence; my dear widow, says I, the love of you, and your civilities, having relaxed all thoughts of my own concerns in London, I am thinking to make a journey thither, to receive the dividends, and interest of my moneys in the publick funds; and as I am a lover of riding, it will be a pretty amusement for me, for a fortnight, or three weeks; now in the mean time, if you should hear of a proper purchase, inform yourself of its conditions, and let me have a line from you, directed to Tom's coffee-house in Cornhill; that before my return, I may order my moneys accordingly.

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The widow seemed very loth to part with me, but however must acquiesce to the necessity of my affairs, which she understood required my presence; so supplying me with two guineas, she had received for the last week's board of her lodgers, I hired one of the best horses I could get, and set out upon my journey.



C H A P. IX.

Resolves for the highway. Robs a coach. Escapes. His booty. His dream. Raises money. Seeks after his wives.

I Pursued the London road, till I came within few miles of Stafford; when I turned to my right, with intent to lie a night or two there, and fully resolve with myself, what course I should take next; for as yet I was divided between Fanny, and my Incognita. From Fanny I had hopes of a small supply, and then of finding an early pretence for quitting her again; and if my old conductress was but still living, I was not without some hopes from my Incognita; but before I could come fairly

to a resolution upon either, the thoughts of Fanny's having vested all her cash in her shop, and the dread of falling into my wife's hands at London, absolutely broke all connexion of my projects, and I fell upon the bold resolve of the highway.

Why, said I, do I linger! why do I hesitate! money may be gotten there, and money I cannot live without. If I pass to London, should I be taken, I die; nor can I but die for a robbery. I have a good horse under me, nor will I be seized alive; at worst it is but shooting myself, if too severely pressed; hence then every other thought! be this my standard!

I had now wrought myself to such a pitch, that I longed to be in action; I purchased a pair of old pistols, made me some balls, and procuring a small horn of powder, esteemed myself equipped for my new employment, and longed to be exercising my hand in my assumed profession. I had calculated to an hair how I would behave, both for the onset, action, and retreat; and had so schemed it over in my own fancy, that I began to think there was nothing in it of difficulty, or even danger, to a mind resolved, and couragious.

The evening before my intended sally, there arrived at my inn, a coach and four,
with

with a gentleman, lady, and a servant maid in it; and three footmen on horseback, mounted to my thinking on coach horses. I had observed them very narrowly, and could esteem them no less than persons of the first figure, having every thing so genteel about them; when perceiving the lady, as she arose to alight, take somewhat from behind the cushion where she sat, and wrapping it up in her handkerchief, bring it in with her; a sudden thought seized me, that whatever it was she had been so careful of, it must needs be of sufficient value for me to venture at; and accordingly I determined, at all hazards, to make it my own, or die in the attempt. Here are three servants on horseback, says I; but if I point my pistol to the lady's breast, swearing boldly I will that instant fire, if her husband does not order them to retreat; she will undoubtedly, to preserve her being, engage him on my side; when having possessed myself of this treasure, I will make the best of my way out of their reach; for their heavy beasts will never be able to overtake me.

This thought, neither sleeping or waking, ever once quitted my head all night; and the coach had no sooner left the inn, than I was prepared for following it; but

I kept at a distance till a proper opportunity offered.

I followed a good while without the least prospect of success; when it being very dusty, and the wind in their faces; upon entering Cannock wood, the three servants stopped to drink at a little ale-house, while the coach bowled on at a great rate. I took then my opportunity of coming up with them, just as the coach had sunk into a hollow; and being out of sight of the horsemen, I commanded the coachman to stop, or I would shoot him from his box: he obeyed me, and being on the gentleman's side of the coach, I told them, their lives depended upon the dispatch they made in delivering to me all they had of value about them, and especially what the lady had deposited behind her seat; (for I had observed that she had stowed it in the same place when she sat out) the gentleman with but slight reluctance produced to me his purse, and watch; but the lady beginning to hesitate, upon my swearing that another word in contradiction to my demand, would produce a brace of balls in her body, she reached over to me, a little mother-of-pearl cabinet, about the size of a penny loaf. I was stowing it in the loose pocket of my great coat, when the heads of the horsemen

men appeared over the top of the hill, about two hundred yards behind me. On the first sight of them, clapping spurs to my horse, I gained the next hill, and fled with the utmost celerity. Upon looking about, I perceived they were all after me, and to my thinking, one of them had considerably gained upon me; upon which I redoubled my efforts, till in about a mile's course, I espied two horsemen meeting us, which cast me into a violent commotion; but not thinking it safe, to stand the attack both behind and before at once, I made a push to the left, which drawing my pursuer only after me, I by that means avoided the help that the strangers might have afforded him. We had both of us kept to our top speed at least three miles, and my horse beginning to flag, he gained ground so fast upon me, that deserting the common, I attempted a lane, in order, if possible, to get into the inclosures; where by quitting my horse, (for I was very light of foot) I might have such further chance as my legs would now afford me. It very unluckily happened, that I had chosen out the most unpromising spot in the world for my purpose; for there was neither gap, gate, or stile all the way, or any thing but one tall impenetrable hedge; and the horse-

path was so pestered with loose stones, that my beast could scarce stand.

My pursuer was within a horse length of me, when expecting every moment to be seized, I fired off a pistol at him, under my arm ; but without the desired effect : At which Instant, my horse dropping under me, his, which was also upon full speed, fell over mine, and me, canting his rider with his head full into the hedge. His horse rising beyond mine, I who had first recovered my feet, mounted him, and rode off as fast as his legs could carry me, leaving him mine, behind ; but in what condition I can't say, for I never saw either him, or my pursuer more.

My fear still winging me for flight, though (as I could hear no one after me) I did not then keep on the speed that I had hitherto made ; yet I proceeded at such a rate as my horse would suffer me ; and upon my dismissal from the lane, still bearing away further to the left, I found myself in the city of Derby by noon ; and before night, I put into a little town to the right of Nottingham, where I took up my lodging ; but having lain under the suspicion of a highwayman, when I was not ; I resolved to avoid it as much as possible, now I actually was so ; and for that reason
brought

brought in my horse very cool, having rubbed him over beneath a hedge, at a little distance from my inn.

Surely, no man, equally suffering with myself, for such a fact as I had committed, would ever be guilty of another; nor could I possibly reconcile to myself, either what I had done, how I could have attempted it, or the bare surmise of my ever being able to second it; for never was any poor soul, the night before certain execution, attended with horror, in such frightful shapes as I was. I started in my sleep, and though I even awaked myself thoroughly by it, could not suppress the imagination of thousands of furies about my bed, in divers forms, preparing to torment me. I arose, when though all was dark around me; I visibly to my thinking, saw ghastly creatures, grinding their jaws to tear me to pieces. In short I would not have passed such another night, (for I could never bring myself to lie in the dark afterwards) to have gained the Indies.

So soon as I was settled in my chamber, I examined what profit the hazard I had run had produced; when the first thing that I brought to account was, the gold watch, with two seals of the same metal. I then took out the purse, in which was thirty-

two guineas. And lastly, I examined the little cabinet; but what gave me an extravagance of pain was, that I had no possible way of opening it, but what I feared would break part of the work, which was exceeding curious. My impatience for the knowledge of its contents, was too prevalent for the curiosity to remain closed up, and as divers methods which I had used had proved ineffectual, I forced a very thick knife into the joint of the lid, and by driving it still forward, broke the lock, indeed, but preserved the inlaying intire.

I was so amazed at the contents, that I pitied the lady who had lost it; nor could I of a sudden, tell what step was most proper to be taken in it; but a short recollection engaged me to make for London, so soon as I could be ready in the morning, and I reached Holborn before I slept at night; for leaving my horse at Melton, I took post, never making further enquiry after the beast again, lest he should betray me.

I shall now inform my reader, what were the contents of my little casket. There were seven single thousand pound bank-notes. Fifteen single hundred pound India, and the like number of South-Sea bonds; but what grieved me most of all

was,

was, that save a few trinkets, and a pearl necklace, the remaining contents were made up only of letters, in the most passionate stile from a gentleman to his mistress; from which I could trace a courtship from its foundation, till the enamoured spark sighed with impatience for her coming to town, and their happy union, which by them was fixed for the eighteenth of August; the day I took them being the eleventh of the same month.

I went to bed in half an hour after my arrival at the Black-Bull; but my brain (tho' I was much fatigued with my journey) was too full to suffer my eyes to slumber; till towards morning; when forgetting myself, me thought, I had been charged with this robbery, taken up, and had just received sentence of death.

I remember to have heard of a gentleman, who by all the circumstances, and broken sketches, that his bedfellow could collect from his words, and behaviour, was under condemnation in his sleep. He lamented his fate to such little purpose, that by his climbing motion, his chum apprehended him to be ascending the ladder, for execution; when after mumbling to himself somewhat for a short space, which his companion took to be his last prayer; he fetched

a deep sigh; and stretch'd himself out. His bedfellow then suspecting, that he must have conceived great imaginary torture in his dream, attempted to awaken him; but he was stone-dead.

Now from the dream I then had, I doubt not, but that if my good genius had not roused me, (for I was then proceeding to execution) I myself had perished in the same predicament; but as it was, I felt myself in such an inconceivable agony, (my bed being almost wet through with the sweat I had been in) and my heart was under such a palpitation, that it was not without the utmost difficulty, that I could compose myself for rising.

I could endure my bed no longer after this, and having a candle in my chimney, I drest myself, cleared the house, and ranged from coffee-house to coffee-house, till the Bank was open, and business stirring in Exchange-alley.

I believe, I was one of the first who entered the bank that morning; but was fearful of producing all my notes at once, lest I should be suspected: I therefore procured payment of two only, and in half an hour more of three: About an hour after which, (for I had disposed of all my bonds in the mean time) I was returning for the remain-
ing

ing two thousand pounds ; when accidentally I overheard one gentleman saying to another, as they came out from the office, there have been five of them received this morning, before the bank had notice of it, and no doubt, but the other two will come presently. This hitting so pat to my case, and being all suspicion, I turned about, and followed them a few paces. Says one of them to one meeting them, Have you heard the news ? What news said the other ? Of a robbery, replied the first, in Staffordshire, on Tuesday, of seven thousand pounds Bank notes ; five of which have been received this morning, before orders arrived to stop payment.

I had now heard sufficient to cause the nicest circumspection in me ; so hurrying through the passage into Cornhill, I stept into a coach, bidding him drive to Monmouth-street ; and pulling up the shutters, I alighted at the seven dials, before the news (but just arrived at the bank) could have well reached that quarter.

Here I equipped myself out in an exquisite taste, leaving my old cloaths behind me till called for ; and in half an hour more, I had changed my light wig, into a very dark grizzle, supplied myself with shoes, and hat, and became fearless of every one but

but my two wives, whose malice, especially the vintner's, though it was now more than four years since I left them, I doubted not, would excite them to plot my destruction, should they procure but the least scent of me.

I longed to hear how my wives were disposed of, but knew not how to accomplish it; till an evening or two afterwards, having fixed my quarters at a bagnio, I took a walk by my own door in Westminster, where my tobacconist had lived. The house I found shut up, and by the dirt about the entrance, presumed that it had not lately been occupied; when observing a porter, at a public house door over the way, I enquired of him, whether that house (pointing to it) was empty, and who occupied it last. He answered my first query in the affirmative; adding, that a gentle woman lived last there, whose husband ran away from her, leaving her almost upon the parish; but she slipped herself out of the way, just before her time came. What? said I, did she run away too? Ay, replied he, to the land of darkness, poor woman; she broke her heart, and died about six months ago.

Believe me, I was heartily sorry for her; nor could I discharge my brain of the idea of her

for a long time. Oh! says I, had it been but the vintner! what an happy dog had I been! that creature I could have managed, and made tractable; but the devil himself would be puzzled to handle this: nor could I have any peace, till I had discovered what way she too was disposed of. At length, being in the city one day, I sent a porter, to inquire at the tavern she had kept when I married her, with strict orders, only to say he came from a lady, at a place I named to him, in case it should happen to be demanded who sent him; And I promised him a crown for his trouble, if he behaved to my mind in it.

Before he could be returned, I had planted myself at a coffee-house window, which commanded the tavern I had sent him from; that in case of the worst, I might not be surprized. I saw the fellow return, but then he had been longer gone than I thought he would; yet entering the tavern alone, and then coming and staring about at the door for me; after watching him some time, and observing that nobody joined him; when he began to move off, I followed him. So, honest friend, said I, have you performed your errand? Yes master, said he, I went; but no one knew what was become of her; till I happening to ask

ask a brother porter at the door, he told me, that she had been two years confined in Bedlam, and was then with a relation in Covent-Garden. Well, I went thither, Sir, said he, and asked the maid who opened the door to me, if she knew Mrs. Osborn; but while the wench was giving me an answer, out steps a very masculine woman from the parlour; who's that, says she, that wants me? I told her as you bid me, where I came from; I'll be curfed, said she, if this fellow don't come from Charles Osborn. She then laid hold of me by the collar; you dog, said she, I'll cut your throat, and give your carcass to the fowls in the air, if you don't describe the gentleman to me who sent you of this errand; for I know nobody whereabouts you mention. Madam, replied I, you are pleased to be merry; but let your maid go with me, she'll soon satisfy you of the truth of it. You lie, you rascal, said she, what is her name? Her name, Madam, said I, bless me, your passion has put it quite out of my head, or I could have remembered it well enough; I had it at my tongue's end but this instant. Here Jane, said she, take your hat, and go with the porter, that I may be satisfied.

Sir,

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Sir, said he, Miss Jenny and I came together down Fleet-street very lovingly, when there being a sort of mob at the end of Bolt-Court, I desired her to go without the post, for fear of an accident in the crowd; then turning up the court myself, what became of her afterwards I know not, for I made the best of my way to Holborn-bridge, and returned through Newgate-street.

I tipped the porter the crown I promised him, wishing from my soul that the vintner had lain in the tobacconist's lodging, or at least, had but remained in Bedlam still; for I was satisfied there would be no peace for me, while she was above ground, and unconfined.

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C H A P. X.

*Finds his Incognita. Her presents. Meets his vintner's wife. Returns to Fanny.*

I Had lodged my cash (all but some pocket-money) in several bankers hands, a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds in a place; for their notes were but easy carriage: And having now gained the utmost knowledge that I could of my wives, I could

could not (though I was wholly ashamed to be seen by her) forbear being inquisitive after my Incognita, whose sincerity and fidelity, had not only gained my affection but amazement. I applied to the old lady at her lodgings, where (though she had left them) I got intelligence whitherto she was gone. Being admitted, I first, with infinite confusion in my countenance, begged her forgiveness for my past misconduct for I confessed, that I should have informed my Incognita that I was married, and not having deceived her, under the apprehension that I was a single man; but that though one, who now called herself my wife, was still living; yet that my real wife was dead, and that the living was not truly so; and begged her to intercede for me, that I might have, if it was but of more opportunity, of casting myself at her feet, for pardon.

This I urged in so passionate and sincere a manner, that she engaged to use her interest for my re-admission; but blamed me exceedingly, that I had not before that time made some apology for my absence which she said, had been but acting of a bare gentleman, not to mention the part of a lover; and more especially, in consideration of her past munificence to me.

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assured her, that the dilemma I was fallen into, had so far obstructed the free exercise of my reason, that for a long time, I neither knew what I did, or said; till having so long omitted that so necessary piece of regard, I was afterwards ashamed to set about it; but that my desires were now grown so enflamed for her conversation, and forgiveness, that I had put a force upon nature, even to appear in her own presence.

During this transaction, there entered the most lovely little miss, that ever eye beheld. Mamma, says she, dinner is ready; and, dropping a curtesy, retired. I presume, Madam, said I, that young lady may be your grand-daughter? She is one of the finest little creatures I ever saw; pray what age may Miss be of? she replied, Just turned of nine. I'll be shot, thinks I, if it be not my own child I have been commending thus; observing the old lady to smile, I was just forming another demand, when she told me that was a second Incognita, (as I called her mother). Is it possible? said I, is it possible? Come, says she, you shall dine with me, upon condition, that you keep your temper, and make no discoveries. You know the terms you are upon here.

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Madam, replied I, (but that I fear nature cannot be obstructed in her demonstrations of affection for my own child) would make the promise; but rather than fail in performing of it, I must beg to be excused dining with you. I can't think of that, neither, added she; but will you contain yourself till dinner is over, and then, only not declare yourself a parent for I will admit you to be a near relation who has long been absent. This I consented to, we went to dinner; but every action, motion, the voice, and whatever had been most remarked by me in her mother, (save the face which I had no idea of) corresponded with each other as the wax to the seal.

My eyes, on beholding her pretty innocent behaviour, would frequently start brim full of tears, ready to overflow the boundaries; but I as oft returned the springing flux, or drained it off with touch of my handkerchief: for I was overcharged with paternal tenderness, for the little wanton: But no sooner were we dismissed from the table, and returned to the dining-room, than the old lady said aloud that she believed I did not know my cousin. Madam, replied I, is this little lady my cousin's daughter? Yes, said she.

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heavens! said I, my charming dear, clasping her in my arms, and setting her on my knee; thou beauteous image of thy mamma, how shall I ever cease to kiss thee; then putting my hand in my pocket, I presented her with a guinea.

I was so wrapped up in the embraces of this sweet angel, that I thought it would be death to part with her; but my conductress nodding to her to leave the room, would suffer no further expressions of my fondness for her.

I then begged she would inform me of the state of my other children, which she did, greatly to my satisfaction; and on taking leave of her, desired me to drink with her next day. I did so, when she surprised me of all that had passed between my Incognita and her, assuring me, the chair would be waiting as usual, at nine o'clock that evening.

I was received by my Incognita with infinitely more regard than I had deserved; on attempting to frame an excuse, she denied me the hearing; and at the same time declared, how much reason she suspected I had for acting as I had done; which generous, and humane treatment, instead of those invectives she might justly have laden'd me with, infinitely the

more knit, and cemented my very soul to her.

Before I left the house, I was five hundred pounds richer than when I entered it, and I kept constant to her for about two years, at my usual allowance; infomuch that meeting with nothing to molest, or obstruct me all the while, I became more public than I used to be; for I had, for the first part of my time, been a mere recluse but one Sunday being at church at St. Martin's in the fields, and in a very serious disposition, reflecting on my ill advised behaviour; just as the prayer before sermon was ended, who should turn about her head upon me, (for she had sat with her back toward me) but my vintner in the second pew above me.

My guilty conscience stared me so in the face, that I expected I must have dropped upon the floor; and her indignation flashing upon me, I was never more suspicious of any thing in my life, than that she would have raised the whole congregation upon me; but she restrained her rage for the present, in regard to the place she was in, not doubting to be up with me when church was over.

She sitting down again during the sermon, I crept forward to the pew door

in order to have made a bold push for my escape; when to my miserable disappointment, I found it fast lock'd, in such manner, that I could no ways open it. I fell into a cold sweat directly, and was just fainting away; but while I stood thus pale and trembling, (the confusion of my countenance being but too apparent) the pew-keeper apprehending me to be ill, opened the door, and discharged me of my confinement; the whole congregation, as I stole out, rising with one general murmur.

I making the best use of my liberty, was at the outward door, when my vintner uttered the last earthly voice I ever heard of her; but it was in a shriek so shrill, and piercing, that penetrating my very brain, it was jarring there for many weeks after; nor had I more time, than just to step into a coach at Charing-Cross, before a confused body of the congregation appeared, at the bottom of St. Martin's-lane, in pursuit of me; but promising the coachman half a guinea, to drive me to Kensington in fifteen minutes, as if I was on some desperate expedition; he set off upon a gallop, and was soon out of the cry of Stop coach, which at first moving, followed me very vigorously. At Kensington, I ordered the coachman to drive me to Turnham-green, where



where I dismissed him, and spent my evening.

I had thoughts of taking a vacant place, in the first distant stage-coach that passed by in the morning; and had certainly done so; but (though my head was in such a confusion) I recollected, that I must of necessity see London once more; for that all my cash notes were at my lodgings. So watching my opportunity, for some return coach bound for London, which would not reach the stones-end till dark, I discharged my lodgings, secured my treasure, and took a place in the Grantham coach for next morning, taking up my stand at the inn that night, in readiness.

I wrote a letter to my old conductress wherein I stated the reasons obliging me to quit London; begg'd the continuance of my Incognita's favour to me; declared everlasting affection, and how inconsolable I should be for the loss of her.

Having committed this letter to the coach porter, I wrote another to Fanny by the post; desiring her to meet me at Grantham, the day after the coach was to arrive there; for not having lately heard how she went on in her shop, my bowels earned much after my children, that I longed to be with them; and now I was able,

contribute somewhat to their support, in case they stood in need of my assistance. There was no occasion for more than my request, (I was sensible) to set Fanny on her journey to the farthestmost part of the earth to me; she brought with her my eldest son, and a tender interview we had: hoping, she said, that I would never more leave her; but my present affluence, having elevated my views above a shop life, I related to her (in some measure) what had happened to me in town, and that my vintner still breathing only revenge against me, I was compelled not to fix on any determinate aboad, till her death; for fear of the consequences: But Fanny, said I, how goes your shop on? can you live by it? She said, That she had hitherto maintained herself and children very decently, and had extraordinary business; but was obliged to give so large credit to the country gentry, as confined her to a narrower sphere, than if she had wherewithal to buy her goods with ready money, at the best hand; though having lived very frugally, she had made both ends meet, and was not wanting of a subsistence.

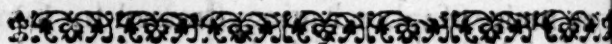
I then produced my Incognita's last five hundred pounds Bank note, which from the moment of its receipt, I had in my

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own mind appropriated to Fanny's use, and gave it to her, as what I hoped would set her above want in her business, and enable her to prosecute it with effect; she was extremely delighted with it, and thanking me, said, That would make her independent on every one, and enliven her trade prodigiously.

We spent but few days at Grantham, perceiving that Fanny's head ran more upon her shop, and children, than on any amusement that place afforded, though in my company; so I dismissed her, with assurance of hearing from me, so often as opportunity presented.



## CHAP. XI.

*Resolves for York. Melancholy accident by the way.*

THE gayety of my temper, and plenty of money in my pocket, prompted me, since I was debarred the pleasures of London, to seek them at the city of York; however, I took no absolute resolution till I arrived at Lincoln; where I fixed my first stage, the day after Fanny had left me.

me. Here I staid near a month, bought me a brace of geldings, hired me a servant, put him into livery, and furnishing myself with holsters and pistols, some change of apparel, and linen; I set out for York.

It being but a small matter out of my way, I spent a night or two at Nottingham, and then proceeded for Mansfield. In passing the forest of Sherwood, the shade inviting me under cover, while my head was occupied on other affairs than my journey, I had by chance deviated from the right road, and had intangled myself within the trees and bushes, which so long as there remained but passage for my horse, I took no notice of; but having strained for some time through a very narrow pass, with tall shrubs on each hand, I was at length so foiled, that I could neither proceed, or retreat.

Finding myself in this dilemma, I began to blame my servant for not keeping a sharper look out, and checking my entrance to this thicket; for said I, you who have nothing else to think of, should observe where we are going to; as for my part, my head has fifty things in it at once. The fellow replied, That he thought I had known some better way, by diverting from

the beaten path ; and that it was his place to follow me, go where I would.

As somewhat must necessarily be done, to extricate me from this confinement ; (for I could neither turn about, or wag many steps forwarder) I observed, that if I could any wise force through some few yards further, I should come to a moderate leap only, which would deliver me to the open grounds again ; and no other way appearing feasible, I spurred my horse through, and went over it ; but he had scarce grounded his fore-feet, e're I expected it had been my last leap ; for giving a violent start to my right hand, in spite of every effort to prevent it, he ran away with me a full furlong.

My servant following me, shared equal fate, and was immediately up with me ; but complained, that he verily expected to have broke his neck. I replied, that for my own part, I never met with like difficulty in maintaining my seat before : But Thomas, said I, what could be the meaning of their both starting so, at the same place ? did you see any thing ? He replied, No ; but just as the creature was alighting from his leap, he fancied he heard something like a hum, or sigh. I heard nothing, said I, but suspected that some-



what white, which I took to be the body of an hornbeam, from behind the great holly-bush had terrified my beast. Prithee, said I, let us ride back and inform ourselves of the cause; I love to search such things to the bottom, for my peace sake.

There grew a very large and thick holly bush, close to the left hand of our leap; and as whatever had frightened the cattle must have been behind that, it was necessary for us to advance beyond it, before we could make our intended discovery: But the creatures on coming within sight of the holly, were not to be prevailed upon to advance a step further, by coaxing, correction or any other methods that we could devise; when observing that it would not only be a work of difficulty, but of danger also, to compel them; I ordered Thomas to alight, and giving me his bridle, to step to the spot on foot.

Whilst we were thus engaged, he being just dismounted, we both distinctly heard a groan; but very faint. Hark! said I, let's be silent! it will be repeated; and presently it was so: But it seemed then, rather like some one straining hard, than groaning.

Thomas, whose hair had by this time stiffened into bristles, hung back, and

seemed very irresolute; till at length, as pale as ashes, he told me, that he was afraid to go forward. I laughed at him, in hopes of shaming him out of his consternation; I encouraged him; I seemed angry; but all to no manner of purpose; he replied, that he durst not venture, unless I would go with him.

Having spent so many fruitless arguments upon Thomas, I could do no less (than upon his refusal) to undertake the task myself; so quitting my horse to him with my pistol in hand, and all the forced courage that I could muster to my aid, I advanced to the turn of the holly bush; when such an horrid spectacle opposed my sight, as wholly overpowered and dismayed me. It was of a young creature, tied with her hands behind her round a tree, against which her back was placed, with a cord about her neck also, and with her mouth which was upon the wide stretch, crammed full of something white.

This gasty sight so chilled my blood and benumbed my faculties, that I was neither prepared for her assistance, or my own retreat, for some time; till judging by the prospect, that it was improbable any one should be near her, (for I suppose it would have been inconsistent with her

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man nature, long to have endured a view of so miserable an object, without affording relief) having first cast my eyes round me, to be sure the coast was clear, I proceeded to unbind both her hands and neck; when she instantly sunk at the foot of the tree wholly unable to support herself.

I then setting her upright against the tree, endeavoured to unstop her mouth; but an iron gag prevented my extracting from thence a large white handkerchief, till I had first removed that; for it having extended her jaws beyond their natural dimensions, it proved both a difficulty to me, and undoubtedly, a great pain to my patient. At length, however, I did accomplish it, and set her mouth at liberty; but her jaws and tongue were so stiff, and feeble, that it was some hours before she could move the one, or close the other; nor was she able to speak a word, till the next day; all that she could do was, by slow motions of her head, and eyes, to express her gratitude for my care of her.

Having proceeded thus far, I could not resist the motives of my compassion for her further relief, nor would I suffer her to lye and perish there; for she was no more able to walk, or even stand alone, than a new born infant: So returning to Thomas,

I unfolded to him what had detained me so long, and told him, that he must ride to the next town, for some conveyance to carry the poor wretch thither; for that I was resolved, as providence had led me to her succour, not to desert her in her calamity.

Thomas replied, that he could with equal facility find his way to Rome, as out of the forest; and that should chance conduct him out, he should never be able to return, to that cramp place again: Then said I, leave the search to me; but I insist upon it, that as a man and a christian, you stir not from this spot till my return; which after some hesitation, he promised me that he would not.

Recollecting with myself, that when we deflected from the road, we had entered the wood upon the right; I was certain, that it must be by inclining to the left, that I must recover it again: This way therefore I took, and in half an hour's brisk riding, fell in with it. I then put on very smartly, not knowing how far it might be to the next village; but had not proceeded far, before I met a cart, on its return from the delivery of a load there.

I enquired whereabouts I was? and how far to the next town? The carter answered,  
*that*

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that I was in Sherwood forest; and that the nearest town was Newsted. I then asked him, what I should give him to carry a light burthen from thence to Newsted? he apprehending it must be deer, (for I had told him it lay amongst the trees) declined having any thing to do with it, pretending business at home, and that he could no ways go with me; till upon disclosing the affair to him, and the necessity there was of such a carriage; that, together with the promised reward of a crown for his trouble, spurring him forward, he with great alacrity undertook the job.

I had made such perfect remarks, all the way that I rode through the wood, and also of the spot where I first deserted it for the road, that we were under little or no difficulty in finding our way back, where Thomas remained upon the spot; who from the moment of my departure, had betook himself to horse, and had patrolled within a limited distance; for that being on horseback, he said, he was ready prepared for flight, in case any one should have had a design upon him.

The poor girl was much recovered in her spirits since I had left her; but could neither make use of her limbs, jaws or tongue yet; so that lifting her into the cart, we set



her upright, and I made Thomas sit by to support her, myself leading his horse to Newsted.

About a mile from the town, (the carter having directed me to what he called the best house there) I rode on before, ordered a bed to be made up, and some white wine whey to be prepared; and the landlady being a good motherly woman, I reported the case to her, and took her advice in the management of the young creature, (for she could not to my thinking be above eighteen years of age) and we had no sooner prepared for her reception, than the cart appearing, we gently conveyed her to her chamber, where I left her to the care of our landlady and her maid.

Having by this time broken in upon the afternoon, and being anxious for knowing what alteration a night would produce in my patient, I fixed my quarters there till the next day, taking a walk after dinner to view the country.

My landlady, after my return, informed me, that she hoped the girl was better; for that, after with much ado she had received down about half a pint of the whey, by spoonfuls, she was fallen into a fine sleep and she was in hopes by a little more nourishment, and rest, she would be finely recovered.

covered by morning; for that she purposed her maid should sit up with her.

I was so pleased, at the charitable disposition of the good woman towards the helpless girl, that I assured her, I would pay for whatever trouble and charge she should be at; begging her not to spare for any cost, that might contribute to her recovery; for that I longed to hear from her own mouth, what could have given occasion for so barbarous a fact.

At breakfast the next morning, my landlady assured me that the young woman was so well as to get up, and walk about the room, and asked me whether I would please to have her come down, and return me thanks for my kindness to her; for she was upon the rack, she said, till she could have an opportunity of testifying her gratitude, to so generous a benefactor. What! replied I, can she speak too? She answered, yes; but falteringly, for she complains of violent pain in her jaws, and tongue still: In short, says she, though she is quite a new creature, she is far from being the girl that another day or two may produce. I therefore desired that she might not quit her chamber, for that myself would wait upon her there presently.

The consummate distress of the object before me, had prevented my taking any notice of her features, the day before; but upon my being now introduced to her, I soon discovered, that they were very far from disagreeable, though she looked exceeding pale, and hollow-eyed; and then by her cloaths, she seemed not to be of the meanest rank in life; for she was drest in as neat a printed linen, as any woman need to have appeared in, with every thing suitable. I saluted her, which she greedily permitting, fell on her knees in the most passionate manner, both praying for me, and thanking me for her deliverance.

I told her, that the cause of her confinement in that solitary place, and dismal manner, was what would be very agreeable to me to hear, whenever it would prove so to her to relate it, though perhaps it might not then be so; and that as for what I had immediately contributed to her safety, she was sensible, that as I was wholly unacquainted with her, before the late accidental losing my way had discovered her to me, she ought not to be so anxious as she appeared to be, for that she could not return me a recompence; for that had it been any one else in her circumstances, my  
humanity

humanity would have urged me, to have proceeded in the same manner with them: So that it was rather the object, than herself, which had moved my compassion and regard.

She owned, that it was not without pain that she then spake at all, but if I required it, she would immediately proceed to an account of herself; though if it would be equally satisfactory to me, she would rather defer it till the next day, when she hoped to be better qualified. This I agreed to, begging her in the mean time, to want nothing that she had a mind to; but freely to require it, the good woman having unlimited orders from me, to supply all her demands. My seeming concern and care had such an effect upon her, that she was unable, but by tears, to express her satisfaction; which obliged me to quit the room, after assuring her, that I would see her again on the morrow.

The next morning, she would have come down stairs to me; but I sent her word, that I purposed to breakfast with her in her own apartment, and then claim the promise she had made me, on the preceding day.

We had abundance of compliments about the sitting at breakfast with me; but I prevailing,

vailing, obliged her to compliance: And when the things were removed, she proceeded to acquaint me, that her father, Philip Langton, was a butcher, who carried on a great trade, and thereby lived as well as most gentlemen in the county. That her mother, who was a gentleman's daughter, brought him fifteen hundred pound to her fortune; but had no other child by him than herself. That she was named Jane, after her mother, who died in her fifteenth year; when herself became mistress of her father's family. That he was naturally a rough and morose man, though seemingly tender of her, till about half year since, when he married his own maid, one of the brutishest creatures that she ever knew. That this marriage, intirely divesting her of all pre-eminence in the family, could not but be most disagreeable to her, though she endeavoured (all that was in her power) to behave to her, as to her father's wife; but that her mother-in-law, not able to endure her in the same house, would allow her father no peace, till he should turn her out of doors; which she resenting, they had a quarrel, upon which her new mother insisted, that her father should either dispose of her, or that she would quit herself.



My father, adds she, to gratify that brute of a woman, promised to convey me to an aunt, which he said, I had in York-shire, (though myself had never heard of any such relation) but being glad of any opportunity of absence from such an abusive, and imperious woman, I readily accepted the offer, and set out on horse-back behind him, on the journey. They passed through the forest a long way, she said, before they arrived at the fatal tree, from whence I relieved her.

My father, said she, stopping by the thicket, alighted; and under pretence of some alteration to the saddle, dismounted me too; (for who could have suspected mischief from one's own father?) but I was no sooner on my feet, than asking for my handkerchief, he threw me along, forced it into my mouth to prevent my cries, and clapped the gag (which you, Sir, was so kind to free me from, when I was unable to thank you) between my teeth; then raising me up, (though I expected no less than immediate death, which would have been far milder treatment than the condition he exposed me to) he fastened me to the tree in the manner that you found me.

I enquired how long she had been in those circumstances before I found her?  
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she said, Two whole nights; for that I released her on the third day. Was it possible said I, for such barbarity to proceed from a father? What did you say to him all the while? O! said she, had I been but permitted to have pleaded for myself, my intreaties possibly, might have melted him to compassion; but before I in the least suspected his design, the cloth in my mouth had prevented my speaking it to him; for I had nothing for it now, but the dumb shew of my hands, and eyes; which yet one would scarce have thought, should have been insignificant to a father; but he was already determined to go through with it; though I was no ways insensible of the horror, which for the whole transaction surrounded him; the sweat pouring from his face like a deluge.

You havenot informed me, child, said where your father lives yet. That Sir, replied she, is what I would be excused from. How? replied I, is it not fitting that such a villain should suffer for this? Sir, said she, you know not my father: Should he escape with any less punishment than death (which I should be sorry to occasion him) my life would never be secure to me. No Sir, he has done his worst; he is my father. I can work for my living; and his imagination

ing me to be no more, may free me from any further marks of his tyranny; at least if I am disabled from work, I can beg, or at worst starve, which I shall sooner submit to, than suffer him to know that I am as yet living.

She spake this with so serene an air, as both charmed, and amazed me. Why child, said I, have you ever been used to work? If your mother brought such a fortune into the family, it is most likely there is some settlement or other which should entitle you to a maintenance, at least after your father's death. She replied, that her mother was too notable a woman herself, to indulge any one in idleness about her, especially her own daughter; and that she was very capable of work, both sitting and stirring, when she should have recovered her strength again. She added, that till I mentioned her mother's settlement, she was unwilling to load her father with more than was necessary for her relation; but that one thousand pounds was settled for her use, upon the decease of her father; and her mother-in-law being with child, she did not doubt was a great motive, for her father's making away with her, that his next child might enjoy it; for that in case of her death before marriage, it was all her  
 I

I had so much compassion for the girl, and the circumstances that her story was attended with, that I told her I was going into Yorkshire, to settle; and as I had but one servant, and myself in family, in case she was resolved upon service, and would go with me, I would receive her as my domestick. She could scarce contain herself at hearing this: Go with you, Sir, answered she, and thank you too. Of the thoughts of that will alleviate all my miseries, and give me cause rather to be thankful to, than to curse my father, for his late act, as it will in its consequence, introduce me to the service of so benevolent a gentleman as you are.

In short I stayed another day, till Jenny was able to endure the fatigue of a journey, and then mounting her behind a man Thomas, we set out for the city of York.



C H A P. XII.

*Settles at York. Marries. Is ruined  
by an alderman. His reflections.*

WE travelled no further than Rothe-  
ram the first day, lest Jenny should  
complain of over-fatigue; but she holding  
out very well, we intended to dine the next  
day at Pontefract, which being but a short  
stage, we made but a slow march of it.  
I was musing on a foot pace, when I was  
roused from my reverie, by the most ter-  
rible scream I ever heard. So, thinks I,  
my maid Jenny has broken some of her  
bones, and must be left behind for a cure;  
but looking immediately behind me, she  
was still on horseback, with a dirty looking  
fellow who had but that instant passed me,  
endeavouring to pluck her down. O! pray  
father, pray father, said she, leave me, I  
shall never trouble you more; whilst he  
was cursing her for being alive yet.

I no sooner perceived who he was, than  
drawing a pistol, I made at him. What?  
villain, said I, has not the innocent girl  
suffered



suffered enough yet, think you? But she has received the last injury you shall ever do her, and now I'll send you to answer for it in the other world. I was just pulling the trigger, when Jenny begging me, for goodness sake, to spare her father, I checked my finger, and he giving his horse the rein, went off full speed.

I was very much afraid, lest the poor wench should have fallen into fits; but the departure of her father, and the many comforting words that I gave her, recalled her to herself again, and we proceeded to Pontefract. After dinner (for being now my servant, she dined without with Thomas) I called her in, asking her whether her father lived thereabouts? She answered No, many miles from thence, on the borders of Northamptonshire. What then did he this way? said I. She said, she had been considering; and could resolve it into no other, than that as all his neighbours had been apprized of his intended journey to Yorkshire with her, he could not offer to appear before them, till after such a reasonable absence as that journey might be compleated in; so that the better to disguise his proceedings, she presumed, he had been riding about the country, till a proper time for his return; and that he might have still

kept

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kept this road, the better to have satisfied himself of her death, by re-passing the spot of her confinement.

I told her, I could not think but she must have guessed very justly; but what could make him assault you now? said I, when he perceived you was going contrary to your own home? To murder me, no doubt, replied she, if you had not come to my rescue, Sir.

Well, we had now escaped the second attempt of this merciless wretch, and in another day were set down in the city of York. Here having spent a few days at an inn, I hired a very neat box, and commenced house-keeper; living in as frugal genteel way, as possible.

I had in a short time formed an acquaintance with one of the aldermen of that city, which growing to an intimacy in few months, increased to a strict alliance of friendship. My friend the alderman, as the year came about, was making his preparations for an annual tour to London, according to custom, and would fain have persuaded me to have gone with him; but assured him, that having already been sequestered of the place, I had made so distant aelopement as to York, merely to avoid the temptation of returning thither again; but

but my good friend, said I, you can do me a very singular service there. I might command him he said, every thing in his power. I then told him, that not being absolutely certain, whether I should meet with a settlement so agreeable to my inclination, as I had done, I very idly left large sums of money in bankers hands in London, which I now wanted to have disposed of, in the public funds. He would serve me, he said, in any thing of that nature, with all his heart, and was the better able to do it, as having large sums in most of the government securities himself.

This suiting me peculiarly well, and believing the alderman to be a man of worth and probity, I committed to him my cash notes, to the amount of seven thousand five hundred pounds; taking from him, receipt for them only; intending hence forward, to subsist upon the interest of my money, without breaking in upon the principal, which I computed would bring me in about three hundred pounds a year.

I now thought myself happy, as a private man could desire, in so noble a fund, as would advance me above all future dependance; and for about three years when my friend the alderman went to town he returned me my interest and dividends as punctually as possible.

I kept the best company in York, and the neighbourhood round it; was absent at few public diversions, and had by practice at my leisure hours so awakened my skill in music, that being an idle man, and debonair, I never failed being invited upon all parties of pleasure; and though some of them were expensive, yet the tenuity of my family, rendered them less burthenome to me.

In one of these it was, that I met with a young widow, against whose charms what heart could be of sufficient proof? She had about three hundred pounds a year jointure, and near four thousand in ready money; and was the widow of a nephew of my dear friend the alderman. I had been frequently conversant with her, and danced with her, made one in many parties she had been of; she was passionately fond of my music; what, therefore, thinks I, can oppose my felicity with this lady, for the remains of life? for I had more reasons than the above, for apprehending, that a declaration of love would not be any ways disagreeable to her; but first, I thought, that Mr. alderman was to be acquainted with it, lest he should take it amiss, she being a relation. I opened my mind to him upon the subject, who promised to do me his best service;

service; nay, even to break the ice himself, and found her first, if I would give him leave. This I took for such a particular mark of his regard for me, that I permitted him to do it.

About a week afterwards, he informed me, that he had hinted my affair to his niece, and that having satisfied her, so far as his knowledge extended, in regard to my circumstances, she would be ready, at any time, to receive a visit from me. I was not long, you may be sure, before I expressed my regard for her in my own terms, which in due time produced her consent for marriage; and by a previous settlement, in consideration of her ready cash, I secured my whole stock upon her, which the Alderman gave us an account of.

No sooner were we united in wedlock, but having a great number of bills to discharge for coach, horses, cloaths, and divers parts of equipage, which had been prepared against the good time; I retained therefore one thousand pounds, part of my wife's fortune in my own hands, and my dear Alderman being about to depart for London, I sent the remainder by him, to be employed to my account as before.

I lived near three years thus in the marriage state, all things advancing most hap-



pily with me, having as good a woman to my wife as heart could wish; but had not any child by her. In my third year, Mr. Alderman having neglected to remit me my dividends as usual; upon his return, made some plausible excuse, which at the present satisfied me; nor was I over anxious about it, till I began to be in want of cash; I then applied to him, but was still put off, that it would not be long before he went again, when he would return me the two years together, and finding me straitened in the mean time, he let me have fifty pounds, with which, and the credit I had in the city, I pretty well rubb'd on till the close of the year. About this time, my wife dying, her jointure left me, and I had scarce buried her, (for which (in a genteel manner) I had bills delivered me for above sixty pounds) before Mr. Alderman set out for London.

At his departure, after so long a disappointment, I had not five pounds in the house; which I hinting to him, he produced me ten guineas more, engaging in a fortnight's time, to remit me four or five hundred pounds, in part, and the remainder before his own return.

I waited with great impatience for about six weeks, when hearing no news of my  
 I friend,

friend, I grew very uneasy, and was exceedingly pressed for money ; but the latter end of the seventh week, produced my friend's name at length, in the tail of the gazette, and a messenger entered on his effects immediately.

This news, I thought, would have been the last I should ever have heard ; for it was a considerable while after, that it could be determined whether I had any life left in me or not ; now I did not doubt, but that he had already received my interest, and then I should not have a penny to subsist upon the whole next year, or to discharge such debts as I had already contracted ; but what I must raise, by the sale of my capital, and that went sorely against the grain with me.

Having no alternative, I determined for London forthwith ; and after a hard ride post, I arrived there the second evening. I had brought a paper or two with me, which the Alderman had put into my hands, as a declaration, he called it, of the stocks purchased by him for me, being (as he gave me an account,) for three thousand pounds South-Sea stock, five thousand pounds Bank, and fifteen hundred pounds India.

With

With these memorandums, I went to the Bank, and enquired after my stock; but upon search of their books, I had no such thing there; I then desired to see what was in the Alderman's name, when looking backwards, there had been my very sum to his account, but it had been transferred to other persons three years before. I now thought I should have gone mad; but as I had yet some small hopes left, I went to the South-Sea house, upon the like errand, and with equal success; when upon returning empty also from the India house, I concluded that I must now put in practice my former resolve in the park, and much ado I had, but to wait for an opportunity; for had I but had a sword with me, or could I at any rate have obtained a pistol, I had certainly dispatched myself in the street.

I returned to my inn, under the forest depression imaginable; I went to bed early, in hopes of hitting upon some method of relieving myself, upon my pillow; when the first spring of reflection that arose in my mind, flowed intirely into another channel than I was directing it to; for instead of means to procure satisfaction from the Alderman; Charles, says I, what hast thou lost? I was framing a reply of the sum,

when, Nothing, started into my mind. Whose was it, said I, that thou suspectest to have lost? I know not, replied I; but it was really not my own. What? dost thou grieve for what thou hast not lost? thou oughtest rather to be thankful thou hast had it so long.

I was sensible that this was all true enough; but then, being now without, what I before had, it was a difficult task to reduce me to a right conception of my not being injured. Come, said I, there will still be something coming upon the dividend of the Alderman's effects; but what is that, towards keeping life and soul together, in the mean time? Perhaps my vintner may be dead, said I, and she had about three thousand pounds when I left her. But she was really no wife of mine, I having another when I married her; then I can stand no contest for it. But I have effects at York, why should I not return and secure them? I debated some time upon this; till by my computation, my debts would swallow them up, unless I could withdraw them unknown to my creditors.

This being my *ne plus*, I wrote by the next night's post to my coachman, to make the best of his way to me with my coach and horses, to pack the best of my cloaths  
up

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up in the seat, and to bring his late mistress's cabinet in the coach with him.

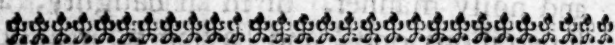
Whilst I was waiting for him, in obedience to my letter, I made another push after my vintner, and gained the satisfactory account of her death, which gave me uncontrolled liberty about the town again. I then endeavoured once more for my Incognita; but upon enquiry, my old conductress was dead, and with her, all my future hopes of ever engaging with my Incognita more.

In due time my coachman arrived, and in few days I became master of all my future prospect, by the sale of his whole cargoe, for three hundred and thirty pounds; with which I began the world again, in a new lodging; for being able to withdraw no more of my effects from York, I sent an authority to one of my creditors, to dispose of every thing, for the benefit of the whole, with which they were all well content, being apprized what a sufferer I had been by the Alderman.

I had not been wanting in my attempts, to snap up some rich wife if I could, that method having heretofore succeeded the best of any with me, in the former shipwrecks of my fortune; but could plainly discover, that I was not the man I had  
I 3 been



been, in the womens eyes, fifteen or twenty years before ; though I was sensible of no decay in my nature ; and their neglect of me, reduced the opinion I had formerly entertained of myself, to a very narrow limit.



### C H A P. XIII.

*His intrigue with a merchant's lady.  
Absconds.*

I Had almost concluded my second hundred pound, when a merchant, in whose company I had often been at Loyd's, and had formed the degree of a coffee-house acquaintance with, invited me to dine with him in Mincing-lane. I accepted his offer and was entertained like a lord by him, there being the utmost profusion of plate, wines, and eatables, even more than could well grace a nobleman's table ; with four servants in livery, each attending on his proper part of the duty.

This grandeur, at the meal of a private man, as sedulous after trade abroad, as the meanest artificer, and as easy of access

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put me upon several reflections, as to the nature of mankind, and their different situations in life. In the country, said I, vast abundance hath appeared to me upon the like occasion; but ten to one, but the master's brow hath been clouded; he welcomes his friend; but it is either in a rude, and noisy manner, or in an haughty, and supercilious one; and having no real business in his head to employ it upon, is obliged to deprive himself of the little sense he has left before bed-time, that he may forget himself, and be cast into his bed at ease: But how different is all around me here! This gentleman, by the daily gain that employs his thoughts, is obliged to be temperate, that his faculties may be ever upon the watch for his advantage; and by a constant influx of daily wealth, feels not the loss by tenants, or those other drawbacks to which the country Esquire is liable; but is in his family, the demy-emperor; where every one around him being constantly well paid, and fed, return their chearful tribute of service to him again.

I looked upon my friend's wife, who was much younger than himself, as one of the finest women I had ever seen; being far from what in general estimation passes for a beauty, though charmingly genteel,

free, and good-natured ; and was as perfectly acquainted with me at first sight, as if I had been for years her intimate.

We had not long dined, and drank the usual healths of the table, which I perceived were every day repeated ; but the bottles being removed, he asked his lady how she purposed to bestow her evening ? She replied, That she had thoughts of taking a turn in the Spring-gardens, if any of her neighbours were disposed to go with her, which she should enquire presently ; for she judged it to be a very improper place, for a lady to appear in without a gentleman.

This speech, affording me an opportunity of offering my service to conduct her ; Do so, do so, said the merchant ; you are an idle man, a proper implement for the women ; but hark ye, take care ; you know not what you have engaged in ; for my wife will find you employment enough, if you love dangling. My dear, replied the lady, this is always your way ; you would make your wife appear to strangers, to be one of the giddiest creatures in nature ; but (turning to me) pray don't mind him, Sir, said she ; for if I pleased I could say as much for him, though not of the same kind ; I would say, Sir, if you  
keep

keep my husband company, he will draw you every night into a set of such sober citizens, as will send you home melancholy, and over head and ears in the vapours.

My friend laughing heartily at her, we passed our time, by the help of a few such sparring blows, in great pleasantry, till the lady's servant informed her, that the chariot waited.

We took several turns in the garden, then inviting her into a box, I regaled her with the choicest of every thing that the house afforded; but whilst I went (in the absence of the waiter) to bespeak somewhat, which I thought might add to our delicacies, she had discharged the whole reckoning; and on my offering to pay, at our coming off, I was immoderately put to the blush, by the waiter's assurance, that all was paid. I was about to have made some compliments upon that head, and those no mean ones, according to my taste; but she stopt my mouth, with Sir, I am afraid you have been sufferer enough by my company so long, which you having so generously dispensed with, I could do no less than disburthen you of an expence for a married woman.

I assured her, that the delight I had received from her conversation, for the

short moment of time that I had enjoyed it, in my estimation, exceeding every satisfaction that could be put in competition with it; my mite could never be dispensed with more alacrity, than where it might in the least but contribute to her gratification.

Mr. Osborn, said she, (looking me over very earnestly,) pray what loftier flights have you in store for your real mistress, than these you have complimented me with? I replied, that as whatever I should have said to her, would have flowed from a just sense of her true perfections, so it was but natural, that the same sensations should produce the same effects towards each as agreeable an object.

In short, as this lady's mien and elegance had roused up my passions to a most exalted degree of delight for her person; so if I was not excessively deceived, mine was very far from being odious to her; and the sparks of concupiscence kindling more and more in our desires, I was persuaded, would in short time break out in flame, should we be permitted to frequent intercourse.

We retired from the gardens; but nothing was more visible to me, than that the supreamest satisfaction each of us received, in our return home was, the suck-  
ing



ing in and improving such commendatory hints, as were aimed by each at the other. Nevertheless my heart was so fearless of the consequences, that I consulted nothing more, than how to prosecute this new amour with effect.

I met the merchant the next day at the coffee-house, and enquiring how his lady did after her walk, told him, That I had thoughts, with his leave, of drinking tea with her that afternoon. He replied, That I had better dine with him again, and then I should be in readiness for tea time. I returned him my compliments; and as that was an invitation by no means to be slighted, I closed with it, and accompanied him.

Before we rose from table, we had fixed our rout for the Opera that evening; and happening to be very early there, before the company came in, had the benefit of offering (by the gloomy shade that surrounded us) some such tender things, as possibly must have been stifled in greater brightness; for as the robber avoids the day, nor even reddens at his own transactions, in the absence of light to behold him; so we scrupled not to publish some things in the dark, which neither could be sensible that the other blushed at.

It is amazing, what a shyness there is between the sexes, till their inclinations each for other are truly fathomed ; but no sooner is the vail removed, than that address which had before been rejected with seeming scorn, is cherished into mutual appetite, increasing, longing, panting for fruition.

This was our case to a tittle ; for we had no sooner made the discovery, than I told her, that as it would be full four hours ere the Opera was concluded, it was my opinion, we might pass that time much more engagingly, than in lingering out the tedious moments where we then were : So taking her hand in mine, and squeezing it, I begged her to follow me. She made some faint scruples about her coach, and servants ; but intreating her to leave the consideration of them to me, I assured her, I would manage all to her satisfaction.

I led her out the back way, then stepping into the first hackney coach, I directed him to the bagnio I then named to him ; where making the best use of our time, we in a trice settled matters upon a more amiable footing, than an age of scruples and formalities would have admitted of ; and returning at the close of the entertainment, we entered our coach in the Hay-market,

market, and drove home as well pleased, and demure as judges.

There are so many expressions of fondness for a beloved object, besides mere words, that I was upon my guard ever after, before her husband, or even his servants themselves; and either upon the merchant's invitation, or his lady's, I seldom missed a day, but I dined with them; till at length, I was as generally expected at table, as if I had actually lived in the family; nay, was even as familiarly admitted to her chamber, as her own maids: for my good friend the merchant, looking upon me as an harmless inoffensive fellow, though of small fortune, was never better pleased, than when, by my presence, I detained his lady, from what he judged to be worse company: So that I soon became a meer domestic animal, and went about house tame, any where.

It was not without some concern, (though I had all along steered clear of the least suspicion myself) that I was frequently obliged to propound measures to my mistress, for the regulation of her conduct; or I verily believe, she would have kissed me in presence of her own husband: Nor could I prevail, by my strongest intreaties, in obliging her to more caution before the

servants ; for the least suspicious eye might have discovered much more than a common familiarity between us, from the far greatest part of her behaviour towards me : But the good man was hitherto blind to all.

We had never stolen a night together, but when he was out of town ; but for days, (she being the daughter of a courtier at St. James's, and upon that account pretending frequent excursions to dine with her relations) we turned innumerable of them into nights at my lodgings ; nor was it long before I was constrained to disclose the straitness of my circumstances to her ; from which moment, she amply provided for me, paid my rent, and supplied my pocket.

Her unguarded temerity, I had often told her, would one day cause a breach in our affairs, and separate us for ever ; but she would give no ear to it, nay seemed even to take delight in publishing our amour, in her own family ; which I suspected, that some of them would, one time or other, discover to the merchant ; and the consequents proved my surmises not to have been raised without foundation ; for one night, the merchant at going (as usual) to his club, left his lady and me at cards ; but in his absence, that

proving

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proving too dull diversion for our sprightly geniuses, we retired to her chamber, for a different solace.

We had not been together an hour, before we heard more men's feet than one, stepping softly up stairs, and immediately a violent bounce at the door; and then another. I leaped out of bed in a moment, hurried on my cloaths, rather that I might not leave them behind me, than for any use or ornament to my body, and gently raising the sash, slid out of the window, into the inclosed court-yard before the house; where having found the gate, and by good fortune the key in it, I let myself out, and away I ran, with all the speed imaginable.

In my conjectures on this accident, I highly pleased myself to think, that having discharged her chamber, not only of myself, but of every thing belonging to me; and no one having had the least knowledge of my escape; there would be no fixing any crime upon the lady; but rather give her an opportunity of condemning her husband's jealousy: For I doubted not in the least, but that it was himself at the chamber door, no one else daring to have attempted such a violence.

I purposed to have gone to the merchant's next day, and to have rallied with her



her upon her husband's disappointment; but when I went into the Queen's-Arms-Tavern in St. Paul's Church-Yard, being an house I was well accustomed to; observing the bar-keeper, and drawers, all to laugh, and (looking at me,) shew great signs of merriment; upon examining into the cause, the drawer told me, that I had left my wig at home, and was come out in my night-cap: I then turning it into a laugh too, was shewn into a room; but when I had reflected, what speculation my wig lying upon the merchant's table would create, I was ready to have gone mad.

I durst not now retire to my own lodgings, for fear of being taken up; so kept sculking about the skirts of the town, for some days, and until I was in hopes, matters might be somewhat composed again; but about four days afterwards, taking up a news-paper, in a little by coffee-house; I met with a paragraph, which rendered my unhappy circumstances ten times more deplorable: It ran in these words, as near as I can now remember: On Tuesday night last, a noted merchant in this city, having discovered his wife to be false to his bed, discharged her from his house, about ten o'clock at night.

What

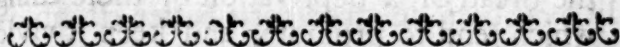
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What an hellish action have I been guilty of! Said I: this must surely be Mr. F—o—p's lady. The very night, the very hour; it can be no other than herself. What shame, what disgrace will necessarily attend, not only her husband, but her own injured family! What will become of her! I can nowise maintain her in her vagabond state! surely some curse attends my every action! I then retorted upon myself, that what other could I expect, from a life so fraught with complicated villainy as mine. Whence can it proceed, said I; that I, who naturally am of an open generous disposition, and would, by choice, act up to the most praise-worthy, and commendable actions amongst mankind; nay, that I, to whom a disgraceful exposure for my secret failings, would be worse than death itself; that I, I say, should ever be induced to involve myself, daily, in such difficulties, as of course must protract my being in a state of misery to me! Whence can it proceed; that I, who utterly detest my own vicious actions, should ever be prevailed upon to commit a villainy; and that, not by accident, surprise, or unadvisedly; but deliberately, and even (not seldom,) from the result of consideration! I fear, my natural gaiety of temper, and the

the dread of a deprivation of those things which tend to promote, and keep it vivid, is the genuine source of all my greivance! why cannot I submit to labour, as others in my circumstances do ; rather than from year to year, and day to day, struggle on through such dangers and anxieties, as would have destroyed any other man ! No, no, I erect the Idol pleasure for my sole deity, and whilst I adore that only, it seems joyous in the fruition ; but the sting that succeeds it, will be intolerable.

About eleven o'clock this night, I ventured home to my lodging, where the first sentence that greeted me was, an account of some ill-looking fellows, who had been enquiring for me, and lurking about in the neighbourhood, till very late for several nights before, in hopes of meeting with me.

This news giving me a surfeit of home I that night pack'd up my little alls that were left, and resolving to go for Ireland took coach from my own door with my baggage, to the Star in Grace-church-street from whence, the next day, I set out in the Rochester coach for Gravesend ; purposing to remain there, till I should hear of some vessel bound to Ireland.



C H A P. XIV.

*Marries an Alewife at Gravesend. Goes to France. Turns Papist. Is confessed. Dislikes his Penance.*

I Continued some time at Gravesend, at a public house, close by the river side; but could meet with no vessel for my purpose; and my stock beginning to run low, I was now upon my wits again, what method I should pursue for a recruit; when still nothing occurred to me like matrimony: for I had been so often used to that, that I had but little now to invent for my introduction to the ladies hearts, having had all that could well be urged upon the subject, so many times over and over.

Now, my landlady being a young widow, and (as I had gained intelligence, worth some money before hand,) with a stock all her own, I grew exceeding complaisant to her; I took occasion one day of wondering that such a woman as she was, should take up with living in so disreputable an employment; adding, the comeliness of her person, and the genteel  
air

air of her whole deportment, must certainly have been designed for a better establishment in life; not to mention, a greater share of beauty itself, than fell to the lot of most women.

She did not seem to suspect me of flattery, as to the beauty whereof she was mistress; but with a sigh, replied, that it was solely against her inclination, to have engaged in the business at first; but it being her poor dear deceased husband's pleasure to embark in it, she had only to acquiesce, with whatever was agreeable to him: But that great part of what they had, being now invested therein, she knew not how to relinquish it. I extolled her merit to the skies, assuring her, how much it had grieved me, when I had observed that such a woman as she was, should be obliged to attend the call of every impertinent fellow, who had but barely two-pence in his pocket; and be compelled to submit to salutes, which were she in another station of life, the best man on earth might esteem as a felicity.

I observed, that my discourse had wrought an effect upon Madam, that I had not taken notice of before; for the very next day, she was dressed out in her black silk, as clean and fine as a lady, and  
was



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was even to a nicety, complaisant to me; nor did I omit any opportunity of renewing my discourse to her, on the same subject; - till having brought her (with a languish) to wish she could be so happy as to be released from her slavish occupation; Ah! widow, said I, that depends wholly on your own choice. I myself am a widower, my—settlement at Dublin; where (though by birth an Englishman) I have been many years established; but having had several affairs to settle with my correspondents in England, and large sums to receive in London, my business being compleated, I am willing to return as soon as possible. I then assured her, that from what I had observed of her person and conduct, I had so just an esteem for her, that if she would make me the happiest man on earth, it must be by becoming my wife, and crossing the water with me to Dublin. As for your substance, said I, that is wholly out of consideration with me, be it what it will, much good may it do you; but your person, and amiable qualities, being what I so highly prize, those alone are worthy of my regard.

Look ye, widow, said I, we have both been married before, therefore it will be needless, for our attacks, or advances to be carried

carried on, by the formal proceedings, which a virgin reserve demands; But my love, said I (kissing her) consider you of my proposal, and let me have your answer to-morrow.

I was then turning about to leave her; when (not absolutely easy at my departure) she recalled me, by her desire of knowing what sort of a place Dublin was? I replied, that it was a large city, like London, and the capital of Ireland, full of gentry, and that there was as good living there, as on any spot in Christendom. That my late wife had a prodigious acquaintance there, which used to delight me mightily; for said I, it was the greatest satisfaction I had, to make one at their tea-table! Oh! says I, you will be highly delighted there; nor shall I be ashamed of introducing you, to any party in the kingdom. Pray, said she, do they talk English? all the same as at London, said I, I shall long to have you amongst us there. Why——then——I don't know——you seem a very worthy gentleman——I think——I believe I must go with you, replied she.

I prest her to my breast, and kissing her, begged, that since she would condescend to make me so happy, she would in one thing more shew her compliance to me, and that

was,

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was, not to defer my joy; for that shipping being uncertain, and as it would be necessary, so soon as our marriage was over, to sell off her stock, and dispose of her house; so if that was deferred, it must of course protract the doing this, whereby we might possibly lose the first opportunity of our passage; for we could, when our business was over, take a private lodging, till some ship should fall down the river for our purpose.

In short, I had so kissed, and wrought her up, that she desired I would act as I pleased, and I appointed the next morning for our nuptials.

We were no sooner man and wife, but our house was to be let, and our goods to be sold by publick outcry; but it being the best situated house in the town for business, we were not long without a successor, who took all the stock and furniture off our hands, at an hundred and thirty six pounds, which my wife gave me, to deposit amongst my papers and securities, with which I had sold her, my boxes were crammed full; and so sooner had I taken due care of that sum, (by putting it into my pocket) than she delivered me two hundred and eight pounds, which she had by her before marriage.

Having

Having fully compleated our business in about ten days time; nothing for Ireland yet appearing, I told her, I had a friend at Chat-ham, which I had a great inclination to visit before I left the country, and that I would go spend one day with him, desiring her in the mean time, to look out that no proper vessel slipped by us: But I am afraid, I staid rather too long for her, because I never returned again; but taking the tide coach to Rochester, I there met with a vessel for Calais directly, which I boarded, and the very next morning landed on the Gallic shore.

I had never been beyond the confines of my native soil before, and being intirely an idle person, I travelled further up the country, making some stay at St. Omers; where I visited their churches, and was greatly amused, at the different customs and manners of the people, from those of my own nation; and by constant attendance at their churches, I was taken notice of by an elderly priest, who by degrees gained my confidence, and we became very familiar together; for I could discourse him on points of scholarship, he being my countryman, (as he told me) tho' bred up in one of their colleges.

He would often lament to me, the wretched state of my own country, in standing out against the true faith; (as he called it) but I having received an hint from an English house at Calais, never to engage in debates on religion, was very shy of entering into any explanations with him.

This he having often observed; after some further acquaintance, told me, that being his own countryman, I might be as free with him, as with one of my own faith; only willed me, not to use any harshness in my expressions against the Holy See; for that, he said, I could no more bear against my own persuasion, than he could against his.

He by degrees, urged the power that was deposited in his church, for forgiveness of sins, so powerfully, and with such plausible arguments, as I, who had bestowed but little of my leisure to the knowledge of those things, could scarce resist; and this, now became one of our standing topicks, in every conversation; till at length, he so staggered my belief, without absolutely convincing my judgment, that I began to consider, that these people were men, as well as myself; that we were polished by education equally; that they were very numerous; and that as their te-



nets interfered so diametrically with ours, but one of us could be in the right; and if it should be them, what a noble opportunity should I lose, of being absolutely forgiven that load of iniquity, which could not, but at times, gaul my very soul, and reduce me to desperate misery. Would not I give the whole world, said I, for inward peace? and is that attainable, whilst my past crimes are daily crowding up my imagination uncanceled? No, surely the weight of such as are daily adding to the heap, is sufficient for me to bear; and can I but get rid of the past, I shall struggle the better with my new ones.

What interest, said I, can this man have in deceiving me? but as any thing is better than to be as I am, I will give myself up to him; there may be some more powerful motives, to cause my abstinence from vice in his way, than in ours; I am resolved to try.

The next time we met, I told him, that I was determined to turn catholick, if he could but assure me of pardon for my past crimes, and could but make me, after confession, as clean from sin as if I had never committed it. That was what there was no doubt of, he said; but as I had as yet only been baptized by hereticks, whose sa-

cramen

craments were null and invalid; it would be expedient for me to pass thro' his examination, and instructions, previous to the baptism he would afford me; and then, upon my true confession, and penance, I should be as clean as a sucking child.

This was so joyful a sound to me, that I forthwith entered upon the discipline, and submitted to all that he recommended. Well, I was new christened, and then brought to confession: Here, (with a more authoritative air than he had hitherto used) I was charged to recollect my whole past life, not omitting the least particle, or circumstance of it; nor to cloak, smother, or palliate any part of my actions; but to declare them entire, with the very turn of mind, and inclination, that I committed them with.

I began, and went tolerably well on, till my adventure in the park, when I thought of shooting myself; but there he shook his head, calling me several hard names. At my amour with my Incognita, (which I expected would have proved an heavy charge against me) he only said, Simple fornication, with consent of parties. Go on, go on. Nor did he make any greater difficulty of my affair with Fanny; but upon my first marriage, then it was

that I began to load myself, he said, by my intercourse with my Incognita, and Fanny. O! then said I, how shall I proceed! Not proceed, said he? You are a damned man if you stay here. Come, let me see, what good deeds have you done to counter-balance these evils? Alas! said I, no sooner was my first wife dead, than I married two others. Two? said he. Ay, replied I, both of whom I ruined in the support of my mistress. Two ruined, and but one benefited? said he. Yes, I told him, but that in a little time, one of my wives died. Happy for her, replied he; but what became of the other? She went mad, said I. No marvel, added he. Then raising his hands a full yard above his head, Have you done, said he? I replied, No. But I was really ashamed to proceed any further, begging him to pardon what I had confessed, and that I would go through with it another time.

My father-confessor began now to storm, and rave, and called me such bitter names as I never heard before. He grinned at me, and looked so fierce, as if every fact I had confessed, had been pointed at him; seeming to be in a perfect agony with me, but could give me no pardon, he said, till I had finished my whole confession.

I then

I then proceeded to my robbery; my next marriage; my loss; my adventure with the merchant's lady, and marriage at Gravesend, with what had happened since. Have you done? said he. I replied, That I had; save that I had told so many lies, and lived in such a state of double-mindedness, and hypocrisy most part of my days, that I could not possibly recollect particulars; but hoped he would take them by the lump. What? said he, never a murder in all this scene? I told him, No; that I had steered clear of that, which was a great comfort to me; unless he should be of opinion, that my second wife died of a broken heart. I suspected, replied he, that this complicated display of villainy, could not have subsisted so long without a murder; but as you have run through the whole course of sin, a general pardon will be sufficient for you, upon submitting to an adequate penance; and as lust seems to have been the predominant vice in your composition, in order to strike at the root of it, emasculation only can set you right again.

I started at the sound, and was rising from my knees, on which I had been couching by his side, during my whole confession. What? said he, does not the

remedy suit the disorder? Desperate diseases, require as desperate applications, and this must be submitted to, or you are a dead man; in sin, I mean, and must be damned, there is no avoiding it. I desired to know, whether no lighter punishment would be as effectual; but he answered, Not so sure; for as I was but a young convert, he thought it best, to make a good man of me at once.

The priest, still observing me to boggle at the penance; Come, come, said he, no reluctance; I'll send for an operator, shall do it at once for you; he has had several patients of my recommending, in the like case, and all have succeeded under his hands, to admiration; nay, are now as chaste and virtuous persons, as any in the kingdom of France: Nor shall you find your condition otherwise, in a short time. I told him, that the operation might prove dangerous, and subject me to a fever; so begged hard for a few days preparation, that I might (by temperance) reduce myself to a better habit of body, to go through with it: And, but with much ado, prevailed.

I was in such confusion, and begged so hard, that he would release me upon some gentler penance; that he assured me, my crimes



crimes would scarce admit of it, and that there was but one way, to avoid what I so much dreaded, which he apprehended, would be so far from what I should think gentler, that it might absolutely ruin me, he feared. I begged him to reveal it to me; for that I would submit to any thing, rather than what he had proposed.

I'll tell you, said he; in cases of sin, a man must part with what is dearest to him, to get clear of that; and as his riches are most dear to each individual, our holy church, in pious concern for her members, hath consented, that they shall commute their bodily punishment, for a pecuniary; but then, as I said before, that must be so large, to bear any proportion to your crimes, that it may undo you.

Undo me? said I, can a man be more undone, than by the penance you would enjoin? Ay, ay, replied he; or holy church would never have permitted commutation. I then asked him, how much would buy me off? He replied, that as I was yet but a novice, he would not insist on more than seven hundred Louis-d'Ors, to be bestowed in charity; but had I been otherwise, he could not have abated me a sous of a thousand. Then, said I, you must

must have your will of me, for I am not worth half so much in the world.

Countryman, said he, I am sorry for it; but as the intent of a fine, in this case is, to load the injurious party as deeply as he can bear; let me know what you are worth, and I'll go as low as possible with you; for the same sum, may be a proper mulct upon one man, that is not so upon another, just as circumstances vary: And indeed, as your crimes are so enormous, you can't purchase your future peace, and tranquillity, at too high a price.

I was now very well assured, that whatever a man had was his proper mulct; and that it was meerly through the peculiar indulgence of his good-mother, that he paid no more: So I told him, that my whole stock would not amount to above fifty pieces. Is it possible, think you, that fifty pieces can compensate for such enormities as yours? said he. I was very sorry, I told him, that they would not. Nay, said he, if you pay it down with a good conscience, heartily willing, and anxious to have advanced further, had you been able, I will make that do. The will for the deed: But beware you don't deceive yourself; for if you should have more, and falsify your account, what you pay will not

not be of the least avail to you ; you are a lost man still ; but if you are sincere, bring me the money on Friday next, and I'll do the best I can for you.

Well, this fifty pieces was to set me *rectus in curia* again ; but then it was tacked to such a proviso, as would not fail to render it ineffectual ; for that I had two hundred and fifty more, was sure enough ; and that I would not part with one penny of them to him, was as certain ; for I plainly perceived, that he mattered not how soon I was a beggar, so he got but my money. To prevent, therefore, idly disposing of any part of my cash, (for his farce would prevail over me no longer) I thought proper to brush off the premisses, to avoid him ; so set out the same night, for Aire ; nor did I ever behold my ghostly father afterwards.





## CHAP. V.

*Turns confessor himself. Is caught tardy.  
 Flys. Goes for an English baronet.  
 Marries at Paris. Goes off with his  
 Wife's fortune. Adventures at Brest  
 with Fausett.*

I Had seen so much of my priest, and the ready way they had of getting money, beyond what I could have conceived before; that I resolved to turn priest myself, (if possible) and for that end, applied myself to a fraternity of monks, at St. Pol; pretending that my zeal was so warm, that I could not rest, till I had obtained the cowl.

Being admitted after some time of probation, I became confessor myself, to several of both sexes; but had not long exercised my function, before I had invented such disagreeable penances for my children, and what I was certain they would never submit to; that by turning them in to whatever I could get of ready money, I could afford to work cheaper, than most of

my profession. My number of children increasing so prodigiously, I was envied by some of my brethren, (whose pupils diminished, in proportion to the augmentation of mine) who at length catching me tardy, in rather a too bare-faced way, I was near being brought to a strict account, that the blame (as they pretended, though they all played the same game more covertly) might not lie upon the society.

To avoid the impending censure, I fled by night; sculking in the woods by day, and only travelling in the dark, for I was assured there would be an hue-and-cry after me; but dropping one part of my habit here, and another there, in passing a few towns, I was so transmogrified, that I set up for an English baronet, on my arrival at Paris, where I was secure from further search.

I made an extraordinary appearance in that city, and kept the best of company, being a constant attendant on the court, and every polite assembly; I could speak French from a boy, so that with the practice I had had in it since, I was esteemed to converse with no small elegance.

Here I fell into my old way of life again; for money running away very fast,



in order to keep up my stock, I converted my mind to matrimony; and that I might rather play a small game than stand out, I condescended to take up with a private gentleman's daughter, whose father being just dead, had left her about eighteen hundred Louis-d'Ors; But my pretence being downright passion, I never once (to herself) so much as hinted at her fortune, having boasted so much of my own English estate, as an ample sufficiency for us, when we should arrive there.

I shall pass over my courtship, and just signify to my reader, that I married this lady; when having some business, (as I pretended) with my younger brother, a merchant in Italy, I projected a voyage to him; but she being very unwilling to part with me, I satisfied her, that my stay would be so very inconsiderable, that she would scarce miss me, e're I should return; persuading her at the same time, to retire to her aunt's in my absence; when I took post for Brest, where I assured her, I should procure shipping for the Mediterranean.

My design was, to have gone either to the western parts of England, or to Ireland with this booty; (for I had all her fortune with me, changed into bills upon England:) And by falling into some little way

way of commerce, to have subsisted myself for the remainder of my days; to have entered into a state of consideration with myself, and to have repaired the injuries of my past flagitious life, by the future exercise of virtue and moral honesty; for I had so long been in a state of war, with every good and commendable action, that I even detested my own proceedings; nor could I bear to scrutinize my past transactions, without the deepest sense of shame, and horror: But this, thinks I, shall be the last deceit that I will ever put upon mankind; and I then, even persuaded myself, that this was necessary to enable me to prosecute the good work that I intended to commence: For said I, had I been destitute of means, at the beginning of my reformation, I should have still been exposed to constant temptation; and this is but adding one more crime to the score; and if I can but discharge myself from the rest, I shall find no great difficulty with this alone; especially, as it will in its consequence, be productive of so great good.

With these resolutions, I say, I arrived at Brest, where not meeting with any vessel for my purpose, so soon as I hoped for, I accidentally fell into company with a young gentleman, who was arrived there

before me, on much the same errand; but designed for other parts. We being both equally strangers, associated together, and by that means contracted an intimacy; and from one thing to another, we fell into relations of our own particular affairs. I soon learned, that he was about attempting to recruit a decayed fortune; for that his genius, he said, having inclined him to a showy life, he had so impaired his substance, that from a fine estate which he once was master of, he had by intriguing, drinking, and other such like practices, reduced it to the scanty modicum of eight hundred Louis-d'Ors.

He said, it was now an extream misfortune to him, that he should not have the least knowledge of mercantile affairs, when at the same time, he could fancy no other means of subsisting by; for as to residing in France, where he had once made such a figure, he could by no means submit to it in a meaner way than he had been accustomed to; nor could he condescend to the thoughts of mechanism. He could have wish'd, he said, that it had ever been his lot to have travelled, for that might have initiated him in the knowledge of men and things, whereby he might have formed some judgment, of what part of

world would be the most commodious, for his settling in.

Having heard his story delivered, with so little reserve; I began to unravel mine to him; at least such parts of it, as would with the least shew of modesty, bear relating; nor did I make much difficulty, of discovering several of my intrigues with the ladies; when he replied, that he took me for a very happy man, for having been so distinguished by the ladies; that for his own part, though nine parts in ten of his estate had been bestowed on 'em, yet had he never once met with the least generous treatment from any of them.

How do you think, says he, I was once served? I desired him to inform me. Why, added he, having several times, with some emotion, beheld a young lady at the public diversions, whose beauty, and modest behaviour, made a deep impression on my imagination; and never having observed any gentleman in her company; I conceived, by the appearance she made, that she must be either some maiden, or young widow of good fortune, and set my servant to watch her home from the play one evening. I the next day paid her a visit myself, proposing marriage to her. I found her as genteel, and free as my wishes could

could have formed her; she receiving my visits with all imaginable respect, and courtesy; but after several applications, perceiving that marriage was but a disagreeable subject to her, I almost despaired of success; yet there was somewhat so gay, so inviting in her temper, that I was not without hopes of finding a mistress in her, should I fail of a wife.

I made her several valuable presents, all which with the most graceful complaisance she received; and though not in direct words, yet indicated by her actions, her seeming readiness to make me happy: But still delayed, from day to day, till I had expended prodigious sums upon her.

In short, I grew so impatient of this protraction, and my uneasiness was now so distinguishable to her; that having for some time desisted from presenting her as usual, she promised me my desires, the next evening. You may imagine, that after so much pains taken for that purpose, I was not backward at the appointed hour; but ravished at the near approach of my imagined bliss. I flew in transports to her apartment, where after some previous preliminaries, I was admitted to her bed, wherein she had already laid herself: But scarce had I stretched myself along-side by her, before

the



the chamber door opening, presented me with a tall, but stern looking gentleman, in the habit of an officer, with a drawn sword in one hand, and a pistol and candle in the other.

No sooner had my lady descryed him, than, O heavens! my husband, said she, and fell into a pretended fit.

The gentleman, having placed his light upon the table, advanced to the bed-side, with every token of rage and revenge in his countenance; but as yet, without uttering a single word. I need not attempt to describe the consternation that had seized my very soul, at the advance of the messengers of death; for shifting the pistol from his right hand, to his left, and with that grasping the sword, I was already, in conceit, pierced through and through with it; when starting up on my seat, I extended my arms for mercy. Villain, cried he, can there be pity for a wretch like thee! a mid-night ravisher! Shall such vile traitors, disgrace the bed of him who has been risking his life, and wasting his blood in his country's service! No, miscreant, said he, this arm shall not only vindicate my own honour, but rid the world of such a pest to human society.

He

He was just preparing to strike, when I pleaded, that though I must confess, my intent was criminal; yet I was neither apprized of her being a wife, nor had I as yet proceeded to action. How? rascal, said he, this that you are caught in, is the first time, I suppose; but cast not your dust in my eyes. Shall I lie under the canopy of a single canvass, in the open field, exposed to the inclemencies of winds and weather, that such monsters as you, may enjoy your ease in silk, and down? Think you, that I spill my blood to support that base woman, merely for your service? but I will suffer the pangs of your own conscience to exercise themselves upon you, before I draw the last drop of your heart's-blood out: It is some mitigation of my injuries, to behold the horrors of your affrighted soul, just upon its departure, from that filthy case, its harbourer; nor shall that brutish woman, your paramour, long survive you. No, let your spirits mix in those embraces in the shades below, this world a heaven too fair, for such adulterous members to inhabit.

This man of war, had by this time wrought me up to such a pitch of terror, that the very stroke of death itself, would have been an acceptable relief to me. How

ever, I had still courage left, to make one more push for my own life, and that of the ladies; for that, as no injury had as yet proceeded beyond the intention, and as that was a secret to all the world but himself, I would render him all the recompence in my power, besides humbly asking his pardon, and acknowledging my crime, if he would but pass by the injury, and grant our lives.

He insisted, that it was such a stain upon his honour, as could not be compensated for but by blood: Yet, sorry he was, he said, for the occasion, which must necessitate him to such an action; but I pressing again for moderation, he replied, that rather than stain his hands in my slaughter, as matters were but yet ripe for action, and not perpetrated, if I would give him ten thousand Louis-d'Ors, I should go off with life; though what proportion could that bear, to the whole of his future peace; which being now broken in upon, could never be reinstated.

To conclude, he drew a note for that sum, payable to himself or bearer, and I signed it, (as I would any other paper he could have brought me as the terms of my release) when he permitted me to rise, and be gone, having first informed himself who  
I was

I was, and where to be met with; and very well off did I think myself, that I had escaped so.

The note was payable in three days, nor had it been due three hours, before it was produced to me, and demanded, by one of the worst looking fellows that ever the world produced.

I had taken advice of my advocate, whether the method of obtaining this note was justifiable; who assured me, it was not, and that as it was extorted from me by coercion, and under a surprize, I might very fairly avoid payment, and should even have the better of it at law. This revived me exceedingly, for I own, that the sum seemed to me to be of more consequence, than to be idly thrown away; especially, in the decline of my fortune, having not above as much more left.

Upon the gentleman's request therefore for payment, I told him I must have time to consider, whether I would pay it at all or not. Pay it or not? said he; Sir, do you imagine, that a gentleman of my profession (for he was drest like a soldier too) will call twice for such a trifle as this? I knowing myself to be upon my own dunghill now, and not in my mistress's bed-chamber, replied, that he might call twice, and twice again, be  
for

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fore I paid it; and that if he had any inclination to try for its recovery in the courts of justice, I was ready to answer him there, whenever he pleased.

My Hector, then collecting himself into ire, replied, that it was beneath a man of his profession, to seek right, by any other method than his sword. It was not his way, to proceed by the tedious steps of law, or to submit the determination of his property to any other judgment than his own: Therefore, Sir, says he, as the destruction of an avowed enemy, is the only proper satisfaction for a man of honour, have at you; and whipping out his sword, he made a violent pass at me.

I must own, that a sword was a weapon I was no ways anxious for encountering such a fellow as that with; though I should have been under less apprehension from that, than I sustained from his countenance, wounded with cuts and scars, all over. Unable therefore to bear up against the shock, I told him I would pay the money. This brought him to temper again; when he declared, that the earth bore not a more peaceable man than himself, from natural disposition; but honour, Sir, honour, said he, is not to be trifled with.

I was



I was so glad to be fairly quit of this man of honour, and also of the scrape which had introduced me to the knowledge of him, that I paid him the cash, took up my note, and dismissed him.

It was not above three months after, said he, when another gentleman of my acquaintance, was caught in the same snare, by the same parties; but he not having wherewithal to pay his fees, was obliged to make application to his friends for assistance, and amongst the rest, to me. Upon opening his story to me, I could not refrain from pitying his circumstances, they tallying so exactly with my own; and upon further explanation between us, we discovered our misfortunes, to have arisen from the same parties, and soon found that the lady was not married, but that she kept these two bullies, and that their sole way of subsisting was, by drawing in unwary customers in the manner they had abused us.

The choler of my self, and friend, were so moved, and our indignation so inflamed at the abuse that had been put upon us, that we armed ourselves, and lay in wait for these two mighty heroes; when one day observing them both to enter the lady's house together, we soon followed them.

and gaining admittance fell foul on them, for the cheat they had put upon us. It now became their turn for terrour; but they made some shew of resistance, till perceiving us obstinate, and no ways terrified, they declined any engagement with us; but we still persisting, that our real honour was as dear to us, as their pretence to it could be to them, they proposed means after means for abating our rage without blows.

I replied, that I came thither for a return of my money, which I would have before I parted with them; but they giving several good reasons of its not then being in their power to comply, and that if I would make no words of what had happened to the prejudice of their occupation, I should have it by degrees as they could raise it; we procured a re-delivery of my friend's note, led them about by the nose, and having kicked them heartily, retired.

Having heard his story with attention, I told him, that I really pitied the situation he had been in, esteeming it to have been a very dismal one; but said, that I should have been a little more scrupulous of paying so large a sum to this bully; and that if he, had but rouzed up his courage at first, he might have avoided it. The reflection, he told me, occurred to him, when

when it was past redemption; but had you seen, said he, the very Devil himself peeping out of the fellow's countenance: Seen the posture he drew up in to make a lunge at me; and with what agility he brandished his weapon; I am persuaded you would have taken him for all sword, and have done as I did; nor could you have conceived from his behaviour, that fear had born any share in his composition.

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## C H A P. XVI.

*Saves a lady from a fire. Proposes marriage. Is circumvented by Faussett. Kills him, and flies.*

WE living so agreeably at Brest, had come to a sort of resolution, of seeking our fortunes together; and had entered upon several proposals, for an establishment in some of the English or French colonies in the West Indies: But were in no very great haste to determine which, till we should be somewhat better acquainted with the methods of traffic there, and which we were daily enquiring after with all assiduity.

My friend De la Fausett, (for that was his name) and I, had been upon those topicks one night till very late, and had parted to retire to our separate apartments, I was passing about the middle of a narrow back street, cross which ran another street, which to the right went directly to my lodgings, and to the left to the high-street: when to the left I espied an house on fire, as I apprehended, from the flames bursting out with great violence, from the chamber window, quite cross the narrow street. I stayed some time observing the dismal spectacle, but could not get forwards to the high street, for the flames which darted cross the way.

I stopt short, at hearing a shriek from within; but could think of no means for relieving the sufferers: when instantly, a young creature in her shift, exposed herself at a window, between me and that which the fire broke out at, crying out, for help. The sight so moved me, that I called out to her to jump, and I would save her fall.

The hurry of her spirits, and the dread of the fire just at her back, sent her forwards, and I caught her in my arms; but had much ado to prevent falling with her: however, I supported both myself and her; when perceiving that she had neither

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shoe,

shoe, nor stocking on, or a rag of other clothes than her shift; I ran with her in my arms to my own lodging, where gaining admittance, I deposited her in my bed, recommending her to the care of my landlady.

It was scarce a quarter of an hour after, that I ran to the fire again, when the house, from which she had descended, was down, and several others on fire near it. The consternation of the inhabitants was so great, each seeking to save his property, that there was no such thing as a genuine relation to be obtained, either how the fire had began, or whether any lives were lost in it; but all that I could collect was, that no one had been observed to have escaped, from the first burnt house, though there had been a family in it, besides lodgers lately arrived from abroad.

I stayed best part of the night at the fire, till by demolishing some houses, they had stopt its progress, and brought it very much under. When I returned to my lodging, I there heard, that the young woman I had preserved, was in a raving fit of desperation, and that it was feared she would go distracted.

I can't say, that I judged her disorder to be at all extraordinary, or to proceed from



any thing, but so violent a concussion of her animal spirits, as could not be readily reduced; being still heightened, for want of rest; nor did I doubt, but that a little composure, would bring her to herself again.

We having never a spare bed for me, I was obliged to sit up till day-light; but the nap I had taken in my chair was no sooner over, than I returned to the fire, for intelligence what mischief had been done, since I left it. I found still a vast concourse of people on the spot; and as is usual in such cases, each relater advanced some different fact; many of which, I could have contradicted myself, upon my own knowledge: But it was generally agreed, that the whole family had perished, with the house it began in; till at last, a lad hearing me enquire of what persons the family consisted, answered, that he belonged to them, and lay in the shop; and that the first thing he heard of it was, a violent knocking at the street door, and cry of fire; but before he could get his cloaths on, the back part of the shop fell in, and he saw the stair-case all on a blaze. He said, he then ran into the street, and thereby saved himself. He further added, (upon being asked how many persons the family consisted of) that there were his master,

master, mistress, their daughter, a maid, and himself; but that about three days before, a gentleman, lady, and their daughter, came to lodge there for a few days; that they came from Italy, and were going to Paris, so soon as they had landed all their goods.

I thought now, that I had gained all the knowledge that I could of the affair; but could not be satisfied, till I had heard from her own mouth, whether she that I had preserved was the stranger's daughter, or the daughter of the unhappy family, who had been destroyed.

Upon my return home, I was informed that the young woman was fallen asleep, which I took to be so good a sign of an approaching recovery, that I begged she might be indulged in it, and that I might have notice, so soon as she should awake, what benefit she had received by it.

I went then to my friend La Fausett, who lodged at the most remote part of the town, and informed him of my last night's adventure, and of the dismal fire that had happened; which he, being but just out of bed, had not been apprized of. I told him I knew not as yet what it was I had gotten at home, or what for a person she was, having seen her but by fire light; and

and that, under such miserable circumstances, that I could retain no idea of her. We dined together, and proposed to spend our evening as usual; but I was so impatient for a sight of my new guest, that I left him in the afternoon, under the uncertainty of my return; but told him, that if I did, I must lie with him; for that I presumed, my own bed would be taken up with its present occupant.

My landlady told me, the young woman was finely recovered; but under the most pungent concern, to know what was become of her parents; and being destitute of cloaths, could no ways appear to enquire after them; but that she had lent her some ordinary things to rise with, and that she was then at breakfast.

I sent my compliments to her, with my desire of waiting upon her, whenever she should think it agreeable. She returned me answer, that she was but in very indifferent guise to see company; but that if it was only me, who had seen her in much worse, as she was so highly obliged to me, whenever I pleased would be convenient for her.

At my entering the room, she arose; and with such modest blushes, declared the sense she had of the obligations she was

under to me, for her preservation; that I was for some time incapable of a reply, that was adequate to express the satisfaction it gave me, to have been the person whose steps fortune had happily conducted, to the relief of so much beauty and merit: For though she appeared, I told her, at present, but as under a cloud of such things as were wholly unworthy of her wear, yet the gilded edges of those rough garments, wherever her skin appeared, like the sun behind its watery veil gave expectation of what lustre she would appear with, upon their removal.

We might have proceeded further in our complimentary way, but for the impatience she discovered, till she had gained information of her parents fate; for whose safety, she confessed, she had but small hopes. I was proceeding to flatter her, with the prospect of a probability of their escape though I was morally assured of the contrary; but had first a mind to know, what she herself thought of their case, and what reason she might have for her conjectures so begged her to inform me how the accident happened, and how she came to be separated from her friends?

She said, she arrived with her father and mother, but four days before, from Italy

that they had taken a lodging in that house, till they were prepared for their journey to Paris; that her parents lay in the front room, and herself backwards, with only the stair-case between them; that she was awakened by a smell of fire, which increasing, she stepped to her chamber door; upon opening of which, the flame from the stair-case, and her mother's room, burst in upon her, and had almost seized her, before she had power to run from it, to the window that I received her from.

She was very certain, she said, that could her parents have escaped down the stairs, they would never have left her behind them; so that the sole remaining hope she had was, that they possibly might have escaped from their window into the fore street, as herself did into the side street; for if that was not the case, they must both have perished in the flames. Here, her concern drawing tears from her in great abundance, I endeavoured at her comfort, by encouraging her (as a great part of all our duty) to bear up against unavoidable misfortunes; telling her, that in case of their deaths, I hoped they had left her condition so good in life, as to occasion only such moderate sorrow, as must be attendant on natural affection.



I presently saw, that I had struck a fresh dart into her vitals; for after an heavy shower of tears; no, sir, said she, I am condemned to double sorrow in the loss of them; for tho' filial affection will exact abundant tribute from my heart, to the remains of two as fond parents as ever subsisted in human nature; yet, my misfortune will gain increase from another motive, but little subordinate to that.

I beg'd her to inform me, what that was? when she proceeded in the following manner. Know then, sir, that my father is of as good a family, as France affords amongst her subjects; he was a younger branch of it, I say he was, for that I have no hope that he is still in being. He, pursuing his interest in the wars, when they were ended, engaged in marriage with my mother, an Italian; myself am the sole produce of that union: but my father, notwithstanding the ample dowry my mother brought him; what with generosity, handsome living, and engagements he was under for his friends, had dissipated near all his substance; when feeling himself reduced, and observing me to wax womanish, not bearing the thought of leaving me unprovided at his death; he made application to his friends at Paris, for some  
genteel

genteel post, from whence he might advance a fund, for my future benefit. His remonstrances were so successful, that our late voyage was undertaken, only to enter upon possession of it; and bare enough we came over for that purpose. This, sir, added she, is my case; so that in losing him, I am not only deprived of a tender father, and true friend; but that too, at a time when it would have been in his power to have secured me a future provision; and what is still an additional prejudice to me is, that I am in a country where I am wholly unknown, even to be his child.

Her story, with the charming manner of her delivering it, in expressions so modest, and affectionate, engaged me so much to her interest, that I even sympathized with her tears; but not to indulge her sorrow, I told her, that as the chance seemed so strong against her, I would advise her to summon all her fortitude, to bear up against it as a reality: I meant this only, I told her, as a remedy against the immediate loss of her parents; but as to her future fortune, I was possessed of about two thousand Louis d-Ors, and having thoughts of settling in some distant country for the improvement of it, by traffick, if she

would run my fortune she should partake of every blessing that I was able to afford her; tho' she must not expect them in a grand way: but that she might not be destitute of the means of appearing abroad, and enquiring after her parents, (for my landlady being but a poor shoemaker's wife, her cloaths were by no means ornamental to the young lady,) I would order her such vestments, as she should judge suitable to her present occasion, and present her with them, till she should have considered of my proposal.

She was at a great loss, how, sufficiently to express her gratitude to me; but as she was under the present necessity of accepting my offered favour, she did it with all becoming modesty: for that as to the dress she was in, she could not say, that she was yet reduced to such humility, as to esteem it wholly suitable to her.

In about three days time, I had rigg'd her out from head to foot, in so genteel a manner, as no ways to disgrace her abroad, and after seeking the best intelligence that she could get, of her father and mother, she concurred in opinion with the general belief of the neighbours, that they had perished in the ruin of the house.

I assisted her in landing, and conveying her goods to a place of safety; and as no further hope of her parents life subsisted, she submitted all her concerns to my management.

Soon after, we took a more convenient apartment, and I introduced La Fausett to her, as my particular friend, where we daily, further discoursed of our future expedition; neither were her affairs, in the deplorable condition she had suspected them to be; for when all was collected together, and we had examined them, we were advised they would amount to a thousand Louis d' Ors.

I had not as yet prest her to immediate marriage, for that I had still some remaining qualms in my conscience, as to my two prior wives; but we were intirely free, and unreserved to each other, in all our advices and consultations, as man and wife; save that the ceremony had not passed upon us; and thus we continued, for about two months; neither should I have scrupled to have married her, but for the following melancholly accident.

La Fausett, to whom I had disclosed our intent of marriage, having weighed it in his own mind, conjectured, that as I was already possessed of twice as much as himself;

so, if by the addition of her effects to mine, I should be so incomparably better provided for than he was, it would be a means of setting myself above him, and that I should never suffer him (in whatever way we should engage) to be upon a par with me; but that he must be the understrapper. In order therefore, to reduce us nearer to an equality, unknown to me, and at such times as I was absent, he made his addresses to my mistress; when being the younger man, she remarking that I had lately made no advances towards matrimony, gave him her consent, and before I had the least suspicion of a rival, they were married.

As this was a thing not long to be concealed, it soon came to my notice; when taxing her with breach of her engagement, she excused herself, under my neglect to demand her, and her thereupon imagining, that I should be better pleased at having her provided for some other way, than by being my wife. I cannot say, but I had wives enough already; and seriously speaking, was better pleased that she was his, than to have had her my own; but still, my honour being upon the stake, it was but reasonable, that unless some acknowledgments were made to me upon that head,



head, I should discover my resentment at such a proceeding: for which reason, I first demanded repayment of what I had disbursed on her account, which La Fausett discharg'd; and then, I sent him a challenge, by way of vindicating my honour. This I did, not doubting, but it would have produced a submission from him, and a request of pardon; which would but have been a fresh cement to our former friendship, for each other; but he, instead of any palliation of his offence, returned me for answer, that he would meet me, and justify by his sword, whatever I pleased to esteem blame worthy in his conduct; for that he could not suffer that man to live, who should suspect him of an injury.

I was now taken in my own trap, nor could I by any means avoid prosecuting my challenge. The place I had nominated for the rencounter was, a large wood, about two miles distant; and both my adversary, and self, entred it at the hour appointed. I had even prepared for that interview, an argument to have prevented bloodshed, upon some slight concessions only, which I verily thought, he must acknowledge that he owed me; and which, being transacted only between our selves, could

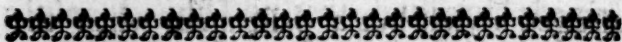
could have laid no publick imputation upon his courage, or honour; but so far was La Fausett from affording me the least opportunity for parley; that we having in sight of each other entred the wood in different places, drawing nearer and nearer as we advanced further in; no sooner were we arrived at a proper spot for action, than stripping, he made at me with all the fury of a savage beast; insomuch, that I feared he would have been in with me, before I could possibly have been upon my guard.

I discovered in a pass or two, the advantage I had of him, in point of judgment which still added to my calmness; and having shewn him how I could once or twice have been through him, if I had aimed at his life; I told him, I perceived that he was by no means a match for me (as indeed few men were at the single rapier) and that as he had committed against me, what he would have judged an offence against himself; I only desired his acknowledgment, that he had so done, and would pass it by: but the more inclinable seemed for peace, he grew the more desperate; and calling me base coward, he flew at me in such malice, that he just penetrated my sword arm; when being sensible

sible, that all I could say, but the more inflamed him, and that possibly, I might chance to trifle away my own life by my delay; I putting by a homethrust he made at me, received him upon the point of my sword, which his eagerness in pressing forward, forced through his own body.

He dropt, nor never uttered a word more; nay, gave not a sigh, or groan. I was heartily sorry for him; but he was now past recovery, and it became me to make the best of my way, out of a country where the crime of duelling is so capital. I was obliged to return home for my notes, (having turned all my cash into draughts upon bankers in London,) but stayed not a moment longer than to secure them; when descending to the harbour, I saw a little vessel just going off for Bristol, and went on board her: but never before, received more pleasure, at quitting any one spot under the heavens.





## C H A P. XVII.

*What befel him on board a Smuggler.  
Courts a Lady at Bodmin. Cause of  
his Flight. Falls in with Robbers, his  
Adventures till released.*

WE had not sailed long, before I discovered that I was on board a smuggler; but they would not permit me below deck, during the voyage, which indeed was not very long. We were about to land in a little creek, a great way to the east of Bristol, when we descried two very large boats coming down the creek. These I was told were custom officers, and soldiers, and that I must assist them all that I was able, to fight our way through them, or they would throw me over board.

I must confess, that having so lately escaped the law in France for my duel, I was not over fond of being hang'd for a smuggler in England; but necessity compelling, I engaged to stand by them; for I took it to be equally my interest as their's, to get clear off; being sensible of how little  
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avail it would have been, for me to have alledged myself but a passenger, when the whole crew would have been against me, had I not assisted; and I had been deemed equally culpable with the rest: so that on all accounts, I judg'd it prudenter to assist in making our escape, than to be taken.

We were come to a resolution of running up the creek, and attacking the two boats, and were preparing for our expedition, when a sail was cryed; and the master taking his glass, called out a guard ship, tack. All hands were then prepared for putting the vessel to sea again; but we being some way up the creek, and the wind blowing landward, could no ways get out, before the guard ship would have been up with us; so that now we had nothing for it, but to run into shoal water, where she could not follow us; but the boats must of necessity be passed first.

We drove down one of the boats with at least thirteen hands in her, and received several volleys from the other; but our wind lying strait up the cut, we out sailed her, and were now a great way a head of her; when lying by, to observe whether we were pursued, we sent out our boat to alarm the country. I beg'd hard to be admitted into her, and at last prevailed, nor was I  
leis



less delighted at touching the shore with my foot, than I had at first been at entering the vessel, when I left Brest; but my great concern now was, how to avoid plunder, by the rabble they were going to raise, and how to steer clear of my companions. I made several attempts to leave them, as we went up to a village at hand, but they would not part with me. I should give no notice, they said, till they had collected a body sufficient for their defence; nor was it more than an hour, before their strength amounted to at least an hundred desperate wretches, armed with whatever came to hand, both offensive and defensive; then sallying from an alehouse, (at which they had detained me during that time) to the vessel, they left me at liberty to pursue my own purposes; but I was obliged to be exceeding conformable to all their orders, or I had certainly had my throat cut amongst them; for certainly, no fraternity of hell hounds on the face of the whole earth, are capable of, or have less regret for, any villanies, than those people. It was dusk in the evening, when those desperate wretches left me. I was altogether a stranger in the country; I knew not a step of the way to any noted town, nor durst I have staid where I was, for fear of

a return

a return of those banditi ; or offer to take a guide, lest being one of their fraternity, he should have robbed and murdered me by the way : So I set forward alone, walking about four miles in the dark, to the next town, and thereby got free from them.

I met not a soul in my walk ; but the miles were so tedious, that I thought I should never have reached the end of my journey ; however, I had a good night's rest when I arrived, which was what I had wanted, ever since my leaving Brest ; for a man that was not used to it, might sooner have slept in a bear-garden, at the height of the diversion there, than in my small ship, crowded with hands, amidst the oaths, tramlings, and noises, of such a crew as I sailed with ; where each man was a sort of master of the vessel.

The next day, I fell into my old perplexity, of not being able to resolve how I should dispose of myself. My Gravesend wife, (if her heart was not already split) was a thorn in my breast, too sharp for peace to enter where that resided ; and being out of all employ, said I, whitherto should she retire, but to London ? there are more trades than one to be followed there ; neither is she a whit behind some,  
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(in appearance) who have gained a subsistence by good humour; that, therefore, can be no residence for me.

I had almost determined to have returned once more to Fanny, and have ended my days with her; nor would that inclination desert me, for a long time; but I could never fix upon it so steadily, as to bring it to bear; for tho' I had a constant hankering after her, it was attended with many objections.

Having tired myself for some months on the western coast, and daily more and more looking back, and reflecting on my past actions, (as I always did when I was vacant from the prosecution of any particular scheme) I became so discontented with myself, that in order to have recalled such of my past steps, as I was able, I had very near come to a resolution of searching for, and cohabiting with my Gravesend wife; for I had prepared a story for her, of my chancing to go on board a ship at Chatham, and of my being forcibly carried away to France, with the treatment I had met with there, and the dangers I had encountered, in my escape home again; but thinks I, if (which is most likely) she should have been at Dublin, and have discovered my residence there to have been a cheat,

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cheat, (for I had informed her the very street that I had lived in) it will be impossible for her to give credit to the rest of my report: So I e'en dropt all further thoughts of her.

It is amazing, that at the same time, that I could not but behold my own iniquities with horror; yet that I could not retreat, and declare my repentance, by a future attachment to virtue, when I had where-withall to have supported my own single person, in comfort and tranquillity; but I had carried on such a traffick in women, that it was impossible for me to live independent on them.

I had gained an acquaintance with a country gentleman at Bodmin, whose company was the more agreeable to me, from the universal knowledge that he had both of men and things; and I suiting his taste also, we became sworn brothers. He had a daughter of about thirty years of age, a very discreet and virtuous lady, in whose company I had often been, and was really smitten with her; neither could I apprehend, that proposals of marriage, would prove disagreeable to either of them: nay, I had proceeded so far with her father, as to obtain his leave, for making overtures of love to her, and by his appointment,

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was to dine with him on such a day, when after dinner, he said, he would leave us together, that I might make myself as acceptable as I could to her; but let me tell you, said he, she has already refused very great offers, nor can I promise you success. I thanked him for the hint he had given me, and accordingly dined with him.

I assumed the height of gaiety, and most facetious and jocund we were, during the whole first course; but my situation at the table being of one side, and my friend's at the bottom; amongst the servants who were delivering in the last cover, at the end of the room, who should I see, but my Gravesend wife; so hot, and greasy, that I was persuaded she had played the part of cook for the family. I dropt my head instantly behind my friend, nor durst I for some time raise it, to look up again, I was so miserably confounded. I cursed my fate, that had placed such an unsurmountable impediment in the way of the very business I came about; But blest my stars, that she had appeared to me, before I had revealed my mind to the lady. I had much ado to sit dinner out, nor would all the restraint I could put upon myself dissipate the dissatisfaction (it was but to plain



plain) that my mind laboured with; inso-  
much, that my friend took notice of it.

I was at an infinite loss for an excuse for  
my conduct, being sensible that to deny  
it, was but to make it worse; so that  
having just eaten a piece of lobster, I im-  
puted it to that; assuring him, that it had  
occasioned me such a sickness, as I was  
scarce able to support under; but that I  
would take a walk in the air, which I hop-  
ed, by degrees, would recover me.

My friend and his daughter would have  
persuaded me only to a walk in his garden;  
but I assuring them, that in such cases, (for  
I had often been so before) it must be a  
long, and smart exercise, that I must reap  
benefit from, I was permitted to take a  
turn in the fields; but even then, had no  
little difficulty to prevent their attending  
me.

I had now visited both my friend, and  
mistress, for the last time; for striking  
cross the country, I lay at Camelford that  
night, and the next at Launceston; when  
still avoiding the high road, I attempted  
Chegford for my next stage; but about five  
miles short of that town, I was overtaken  
by two men and a woman, who enquiring  
how far I was travelling; upon my reply  
to Chegford, said they should be glad  
to

to attend me, being bound thither themselves.

I cannot say, that I should have been sorry for company, it being a most lonely walk, and very hilly; but by the appearance they made, I should much rather have made choice of any other set of companions; for the woman was the boldest creature I ever met with, swearing, and making use of such filthy discourse, as I had never before been accustomed to.

I kept rather behind them, on pretence that I could not keep up to their speed, in order to have dropt them; but they were too fond of my acquaintance, to leave me in their rear, and slackened their pace too; till we came just to a little valley, between two hills, when the woman turning upon me, said to one of the men, (who behaved with much more modesty than herself) Come, won't you see whether the cull has any thing to make us drink? I then began to have some suspicion of them, and expected no less than to have been robbed, and murdered in that wild place; for it was not only out of all roads, but almost wholly unfrequented by mankind.

She had no sooner made an entrance than one of the fellows collared me, and

demanded my money, and whatever else I had of value. I was drawing my sword in my defence, when the woman snatched it out of my hand, and ran it through my left arm; which the man perceiving; Kate, said he, thou art ever for murder, but I will not suffer it, and upon your next attempt, I'll be the death of you.

She began to curse, and swear, in a most outrageous manner, and damning herself, swore she would murder me, if it were only to please her own fancy; and behaved so reprobately, that he who had as yet stood neuter, disarmed her.

The first man having been all this while rising me, had taken about fifteen guineas, a watch, and ring from me; but what gave me some life was, that upon pulling out an handful of notes from my wastecoat pocket, he was so far from judging them to be of any worth, that he returned them to the same place again.

I had esteemed my life at a very low rate, till the man had declared so strenuously against murder, and then I was in hopes I should have escaped them, and have been permitted to prosecute my journey; though I was very much deceived; for the woman whispering one of them, he returned upon me, and pinioning my

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arms

arms behind me, ordered me to walk before him. I had no choice but to obey, and preceded them for about a mile, along the valley; till by the edge of a copse wood, I espied a small mud cottage, covered with thatch. This we no sooner arrived at, than they turned me in before them.

It was the most forlorn looking place I had ever seen; but there was a table, a form, some broken chairs, and earthen ware in it; and at one end, was a door-way leading into another small room. I was ordered to sit down, and lay my leg upon the form; but could by no means conceive the use of it, unless they were resolved to cut my leg off. However, I did as I was ordered, when the woman bringing a round horse-lock, and long chain, slipped the lock through one of the links, and inclosing my leg in it, locked it on fast, whilst I was taking notice, that the other end of the chain was stapled down to a vast block of wood, which two or three men could not stir.

I looked very pensive no doubt, under the agitation of various conjectures, on what would be the issue of my catastrophe, when one of the men bringing us an armful of wood, made a fire; and Kate bring-

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ing a large kettle out of the back room, set it over the fire. They then ordered me to fetch them whatever they wanted, (for my chain extended to every part of the outward room, and just within the door of the inward) I set the table, and prepared matters for their dinner, while they sat idle round the fire; till having done, themselves, they gave me a piece of boiled beef upon some bread, and returning the remainder into the kettle again, set it by.

There was a bed in the back room, in which at night they all three lay together; but I was left to suit myself as I liked best, either by lying along on the earthen floor, or by sitting upon my block; and for this first night of my captivity, I made use of the latter.

It is easy to be imagined, that my situation afforded me but little rest; for from a soft, warm and commodious bed the night before, to be reduced to a great wooden block for one's repose, was a transition too sudden not to be severely afflicting; and it brought to my imagination, the tormenting pangs my two last wives must have suffered, so soon as they had found themselves not only deceived, but undone by me. Why, therefore, said I, should I complain of this usage, who have



myself dealt it in more excess to others? What is there in this, so cruciating, that I have not imposed on them? My body is not in so much torment as my mind; but if this is capable of such sensations, what must not they have endured? I am witness to one, whom I have reduced from a thriving trade, to the mean and laborious capacity of a cook-wench. How could I, the other day, behold her, whom I had ruined and undone? How could I behold her, I say, returning to her miserable station, without relenting towards her, embracing her, and (as I was then in circumstances of performing it) taking her to myself, and making her for ever happy? But it is too late to reflect, now I am brought to this wretched imprisonment! Surely, no man's life was ever so unhappy as my own! O that I was but to begin it again, with my present experience, all the world should never bias me to an ill action! I am now sensible of the contagion of vice, one fact is so necessarily succeeded by another, and that by a third, that the entanglement gaining force by repetition, it is never to be broken through.

How has providence marked me out for its butt, to receive every pointed shaft that can fret, and gaul me! nor am I content

tent upon the least relaxation, till I have treasured up more matter, for vengeance to work on! How gloriously might I have subsisted upon the munificence of my Incognita! for I could scarce have been said to have transgressed there, her circumstances having disabled her from joining in the marriage-state with me, as undoubtedly she would have done, had she been free. Now what judgment, what penetration was she mistress of, when having placed her affection on me; she would never put it in my power, personally, to reflect upon her choice: which surely I, who have turned out so base a creature, must have done, to my own condemnation?

Thus I passed my night, till the morning introduced me to fresh employment. I was then put upon cleaning the utensils fouled the day before, and through one dirty employment or other, passed my day. I had not been a week with them, when I was set to wash their dirty linen, which I knew no more how to go about, than a child; but my mistress told me how to behave, and expected her business to be done.

They would all leave me, sometimes for two or three days in a week; but had it been for a month, my case had been but

the more deplorable; for I had neither hope, or ability of releasing myself; nor could I obtain bit, or sup till their return.

In this desponding manner, had I rubbed on for near two months, when after two days absence, I could gather from their discomposure at their return, that somewhat more than ordinary had happened to them; Sighs, broken speeches, exclamations, were vented every moment, and the confusion they were in, packing up, and setting things in order for removal, gave me no little suspicion, that some cross accident was impending; and at last, I overheard Kate say, in the inner room, I'll stay no longer, I'll go to night. They were now eating their supper, which I had prepared them, when one of them saying, What shall we do with *Softy*? (for they always called me so) Said the other, it will be impossible to take him with us. Why? replied the first, he may carry some of the goods. I tell you, said the second, he'll but be an hindrance to us. Damn him, says Kate, let's kill him. I'll hear no more of that, said the first. Curse him, replies she, 'tis soon done. There's nothing in it; and then he'll be at rest. I can't bear the thoughts of it, said the second.

cond. Rot me, said Kate, if I could not do it with all the pleasure, that I can eat this bit of bread, and think it the best way too.

It may be readily conjectured, how agreeable this discourse must be to me, who was to be the victim of this ill-designing woman's savageness; but I still held my peace, letting them have their own talk out; when at last, it was agreed, that they would leave me as I was, chained to the block, with what victuals they had, before me, lest if they should be surprized in their flight, I might come in as an evidence against them.

Next to immediate death, the leaving me thus chained up, was the most dismal sentence they could have pronounced against me; nor durst I to plead for a release, lest it should induce Kate to butcher me; she being full ripe for action, and mentioned it with all the goust imaginable, and merely as a trifle; for she said it would be presently over. So trusting to what was to succeed, I never once urged the cruelty it would be to leave me in such strict durance; but rather rejoiced, to think I should see no more of them; and after it had been dark about an hour, they locked the door, and went off.

I had for a long time condescended to lie on the floor, not being able to endure an upright posture, from night to night; so that their backs were no sooner turned, but eating a mouthful of supper, I laid me down as usual, and as well as I could, slept till morning; when being as idle a fellow as any in his Majesty's dominions, I still kept on my recumbent posture; but had not been awake more than an hour, before I imagined, that my old jailors were returned again; for I heard several people (to my thinking) talking pretty loud. I was afraid to call out for help, lest it should be them, so waited to see what would be the issue; for I dreaded the fury of Kate.

The voices were presently succeeded by a loud knocking at the door; upon asking who was there, I was ordered to open it. I replied, that I was locked in, and had not the key. They answering, that then they must break it open; I said, that I wished they would; for that I was a prisoner there. I tried what I could, but not being able to force back the lock, desired them to break it open, which at length they did, and heartily rejoiced I was, to find myself once more in the hands of Christians. I fell on my knees, and beseeched



beseeched them to release me, assuring them that I was left by the robbers, merely to be starved to death there, and that they were fled the night before; but I soon collected from their dispositions, that tho' some believed my relation, others did not; especially the constable, (as I took him for) who not willing to return no wiser than he came, insisted on conveying me before a magistrate, with the chain upon my leg; for who knows, said he, but this fellow may be their confederate, and has used this stratagem, to render himself unsuspected?

In vain did I urge my long confinement, my loss, and the misery that I had sustained in my captivity; all was of no avail; but after they had searched the house, and the wood near it, I must, they said, attend them to the justice; and to the justice we came; where they gave him an account, of the condition they found me in.

His worship seemed a good sensible sort of a gentleman; but I had over observed, that a person in office, is an enemy to idleness; nor chuses to quit the chair re infecta, be it right or wrong: for after he had examined me as to my coming thither, how long since, and the cause of my confinement, with the manner of their

leaving me; tho' he might have gathered from my behaviour, habit, and the reasonableness of my story, that I was not an accomplice; yet, he insisting upon the knowledge of who, and what I was; from whence I came, and whitherto I was going, with twenty other such like questions; I was obliged to tell him, that I set out from Bodmin, in my way to London. What brought you here then? said he, for this is not your nearest way. But again asking me, who I was acquainted with at Bodmin; and I mentioning Mr. Neve, (which was the name of my friend.) My particular acquaintance, said he, it is very well, secure him, I'll send him over thither to morrow, and hear what character my friend Neve gives of him.

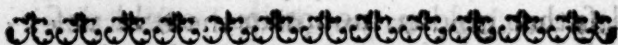
I was reconducted to Mr. Constable's for that night; but had esteemed myself far happier, in viewing the sentence of my death, and immediate execution; for now, thinks I, shall I become a publick spectacle, in the very family of all others, that I have so studiously avoided; and I did not doubt, but appearing as a thief, my wife's curiosity would excite her to take a view of me, and by that means, of claiming me for her husband; nor could I conceive any

any probable means of avoiding this dilemma.

The next day, the constable conveyed me again before his worship, where he appointed a guard to attend me to Bodmin; but I first begging that the chain might be filed from my leg, and that I might not appear as a malefactor, when I was certain no one could prove me to be so; and insisting upon the hardship, of sending an honest man so many miles back, upon so unlikely a supposition, as that I could have confined myself, on purpose to have given a colour for my being an innocent man, when (had I been so, or not,) had I been unconfined, I might have as well avoided the search, as the robbers themselves did. His worship, on weighing the several circumstances of my case, did at last declare, that he saw not sufficient matter against me, to found a charge upon; and that he would release me: But, that his clerk might not have attended two days for nothing, I was obliged to give information against the thieves, as to all that I knew of them; which when he had finished, I was for taking my leave: till the constable gave me a friendly hint, that I must discharge my fees first. This was two shillings to the clerk for writing it, and one to his master

master, for the oath I took to the truth of it. I had not a single doit to pay this with, so that not choosing to produce my notes, for fear of more suspicion, I was compelled to pawn my hat to the constable for my fees, and by that means procured my dismission.

I was never more thankful in my life, than for my release from this troublesome job; for had I been put to my choice, either to have starved to death at the robbers, or to have returned to my friend Mr. Neve's, I had made no hesitation at preferring that; the dread of appearing before my own wife, struck such a terror into me.



## C H A P XVIII.

*Joins partnership with a Brewer. Invests his all in the Stock. Is ruined. Returns to Bristol. Sees his French Wife. Stratagem to get rid of her.*

I Set out for Somersetshire, in which making no long stay, I turned to the left, and went into Carmarthenshire; where associating with a young fellow, whose fa-

ther had been a brewer; through his persuasions, and from a superior knowledge he boasted to have in that mystery, and from an expectation of the immense profits which he assured me were to be made in it; I was prevailed upon, to become his partner in that undertaking: but he having little or no cash, it was incumbent on me to produce a stock, and himself was to supply skill, till he should be able to advance, and pay to me a moiety of what I should lay down for him; and to have heard him explain the mystery, and the profits on each particular, any one would have imagined, that it could not have been long, before he would have been able to have done it. As for my part in the trade, no less than golden mountains, could possibly be my portion.

I entred very heartily into the spirit of this pleasing delusion; and advanced even to my last penny, to bring it to perfection. We laid in such a store of malt, and hops, and procured so many horses, and servants, as if we should have carried the world before us; but for almost twice twelve months, I could neither get him to any account, or dividend; tho' the constant assurance of such great matters, when the trade should begin to make returns, buoyed  
up



up my expectation extravagantly; for I could perceive a vast quantity of liquor to be brewed, and had for every cask delivered out, reckoned upon such a return into my own pocket, as from time to time, amounted to an incredible sum.

I went now by the name of Charles Howet, (as I commonly shifted that, whenever I took up new quarters) but while I was pleasing myself in my golden dreams, I received a letter under my partner's direction, which startled me exceedingly; it was to inform me, that he was under an arrest at Carmarthen, at the suit of the maltster, for five hundred pounds, and that unless I would release him, he must be laid in goal.

I had never met with a more unexpected shock; for if this large debt had been contracted unknown to me, what others might there be? and instead of having a dividend to receive, as I expected, from the profits, I might be laid in jail myself, for the debts owing by the trade; for tho' I had not appeared in it, yet every one was apprized of my being a partner.

In the absence therefore of my companion, I sent for a school master who lived near me, to settle my books; where I found things far worse than I expected:

And

And upon looking into the stores, we had neither malt or hops, sufficient for three brewings; our horse corn was all out, and in short, every article of the profession, save horses and servants, the most slenderly supplied that can be imagined: Neither had we out standing debts, by any means answerable to the demands upon us. I sent the next day for all the creditors bills, and computing that we should have near a thousand pounds more to pay, than we had given credit for, I wrote my partner the state of our affairs, and that if he would agree to make a sale of all our stock, I would release him; but he was at first so averse from it, that nothing but the prospect of his liberty, by that means only to be obtained, could ever have compelled him into it.

In short, all was appraised, and our debts collected in; when the burthen upon the stock and utensils, was upwards of seven hundred pounds; and they, upon sale, yielding about eight hundred and twenty, my handsome fortune was reduced to the difference of those two sums only, and no more; which proved such an affliction to me, that I expected it would have overwhelmed me, and have brought me to the grave.

I was loaded with two wives, without means of providing for either, should they ever meet with me. I had ran intollerable risques in obtaining their fortunes, which tho' they had so long supported me, almost all that was now left, was a conscience wounded, and torn with perpetual twinges, too severe for utterance.

Whilst the method of reflecting continued, no man ever made more serious resolutions against vice than myself; for I was fully convinced, that the vile practices I had imployed to obtain wealth, were the sole occasion of my ill success; nor did I expect that a blessing would ever attend my acquirements, unless procured by virtuous means, and honest methods: But this I say, lasted no longer, than till some further advantageous prospect of gain offered, and then all my former resolutions vanished; nor made I the least demur, at plunging headlong into the like destructive schemes.

During the continuance of this melancholly mood, being destitute of all imploy, I retired to Bristol, for the conversation of those sober citizens, and to live in a very private way. Here I frequently relieved my gloomy imaginations, with fauntering for some hours upon the quay, where

where somewhat new was ever presenting to my view.

As I was musing one day, and almost asleep, upon a pack of goods that had been just landed; I was roused by the sound of a broken English voice, enquiring whether any one knew, in what part of England Sir Bryan Hollis resided? That sound passed like a thunderbolt through my very soul, it being a name I had gone by in Paris; but I durst by no means look up, for fear of discovering myself. Answer being returned in the negative; by this time, the inquiring voice was past me, and I heard the same question put at a distance; when turning up my eye sideways, I had no sooner caught a glimpse of the persons, than one of them conveyed to my senses, the idea of my French wife, in company with a very sparkish young gentleman, as ever I had seen.

This was a new affliction to me, and my assumed name, being part of the first sentence they had spoken on shore, gave me a certain hint, that their business there was in quest of me. I kept on therefore my dreaming posture, till they were almost out of my sight; but the hurry of my own reflections, had almost deprived me of recollection sufficient for my necessary conduct.

duct. I was not willing however, absolutely to lose sight of them, or to be ignorant how they should dispose of themselves, while on shore; tho' I durst not be seen by them myself: So that rising from my seat, I kept on at such a distance behind them, as not to be perceived, till I had housed them in a tavern.

I soon after followed them, and asking the drawer, if a gentleman and lady (describing them) were not just come in, he was going to introduce me to them, when I stopt him, by assuring him, that they were no acquaintance of mine, but that having heard them make inquiry after a baronet I once knew, Sir Bryan Hollis, who died lately in prison for debt, I had only a mind that they should know it; desiring him, that if they made the like demand on him, he would inform them of it. I then drank my gill of wine, and retired.

I was the speedier in my retreat, lest they might be so inquisitive into my story, as to send after me; so turning a corner, I took a long circuit round, and entred a publick-house, where I could command a view of all that passed at the tavern door.

I had not been long planted in this observatory, before my gentleman and lady came



came out, and returned to the water side; which gave me a second opportunity of inquiring for them, demanding of the drawer, whether they had mentioned Sir Bryan to him? He replied, that they had; and that the gentleman, who he told me spoke to him in broken English, reported his answer to the lady in French; adding, that they then had no further business in England; and that by her reply, (though she spoke so very quick, that he who was but an imperfect master of the French, could not well understand her) he apprehended her to be very joyful, and well pleased at the report. That they only eat a cold chicken for their dinners, and were returned to their vessel again.

There was nothing in this short history, but what sounded to my wish; and all that I now laboured for was, the certain knowledge of their departure, which I was in great hopes, would prove the consequence of what they had heard; especially, as they were so well pleased with it: For thinks I, this young fellow is undoubtedly some suitor, who can't gain his ends, till she is assured of my not subsisting; and if once I could but get them married, I should have nothing further to fear from that quarter.

My

My impatience spurred me after them, and I saw them on the quay, in close conference with one, whom I took for the captain of the vessel they came in; when after several arguments pro and con, they all took boat, and rowed to the ship, which was near half a mile down the river. I watched the quay for several succeeding days, lest they should have returned again; but the third day, I lost sight of the vessel, and upon inquiry, of some who had lately come up the river, I gained certain information of her having left it.

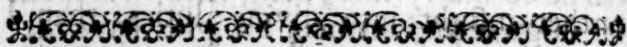
I could have been glad to have been ascertained, whether a view of marriage was the sole cause of this search after me; but the probability being so strong in my favour, I had great hopes, I should hear no more of her; what an happiness, thinks I, it would prove to mankind, if there was no such thing as hypocrisy amongst us, and disguise! what infinite vexations, and anxieties should we avoid! neither had I originally drawn her into the evils attendant on us both since our marriage, nor had I now been put to the mean artifice I have made use of; and yet both our purposes had been as well answered: for I was worth as much before that vile imposition upon her, as I am now, and more; so that I am

no gainer by it; and even now, I am as willing to part with my right to her, as she can be to marry this young fellow; and but for disguise and artifice, I might have met them, and consented to it. What a wretched creature then is man! who can only be thoroughly known by his features, and even them he can disguise.

I must confess, that from the intimacy I had with my own heart, I had conceived as vile an opinion of my own species, as it was possible for mankind to harbour; nor lived there a human being, who ever suffered more compunction for past faults than myself, till occasion offered for repeating them; and then, as if impelled by a fatal necessity, I was so infatuated, as not to ponder the steps I was pursuing, nor allowed I myself the least leisure for receding, till I was again so fairly ensnared, that the art of man could not extricate me: For having so felicitously discharged myself of my French wife, who would have conjectured that I should have attempted another, till the decease of my Gravesend lady; who from her situation in life, having the world at large to range in for a service, could not be supposed to have a fixed settlement long in the same place; in consequence of which, I could never be sure that I was at a distance

from

from her, be I where I would in England,



## CHAP. XIX.

*Marries an old maid. Her death. Reflections. Reforms. Begins restitution.*

**N**Otwithstanding my late severe reflections, it was scarce fourteen days after the departure of my French madam, before I had cast my eyes upon a maiden lady, of very pretty fortune; she scored some more years than myself, was very thin, long visaged, and prudent to a scruple; noted moreover, for a just oeconomist, and remarkably devout; which character, I had obtained of her in the neighbourhood.

I had determined to form my attack here; but had as yet never been in her company, or seen more of her, than by passing by my lodgings, to and from church.

I became of a sudden so zealous a reformado, that I never missed the prayers morning and evening; nor was the parson more punctual to his desk, than I to the

pew which I occupied, next to my beloved maiden. I followed this exercise near a month, and in that time, had gained a further insight into divine duties, than I was ever before master of; insomuch, that had I pursued the same practice much longer, before I had began my assault; I am persuaded, that I had desisted from prosecuting my suit at all: for I had now my doubts arising in my mind, before the onset; and such checks and remorse stung me, as I had been heretofore unacquainted with, till the mischief was over: But I, who could suffer no good impressions to fix for rooting in my breast, lest further acquaintance with them, should render them too stubborn to be subdued; forcibly breaking through the fetters of reflection, only proposed to myself the means, of beginning my charge. I initiated myself, by bowing to her at the end of service, which a few days repetition having made more necessary; I next overtook her in her return from church, giving again my hat, with the coldness, driness, warmth, or windiness of the weather, en passant; from the constant usage of which, I proceeded to news, and in a few days more, held on conversation with her to her own door; and this, in another week, was so expected,



ed, that if I happened to loiter ever so little, I was sure to have her head turning to look after me.

I next proceeded to somewhat, that might introduce the mention of my deceased spouse, in the fondness of a most disconsolate husband, for so great a loss; after several of the happiest years spent together, that ever any loving pair enjoyed. I hinted then at two sons I had abroad, at man's estate, who I told her, were raising their fortunes, where I myself had done the same; but supposed, that when they had collected their twenty or thirty thousand pounds, (with less than which it would not be worth while to return) I should have them settle in England.

When these tales had gained due impression, and I had satisfied her (at her own request) that I had no daughter living, I began to shew my disapprobation of a single life; how unsociable a creature man was without a mate, and the delightful harmony which subsisted in the marriage-state, where prudence, and piety held the steerage; and in a short time more, begged I might be admitted that afternoon, to drink tea with her; which without the least hesitation she granted.

My reader may imagine, that much of our former discourse had passed at the tea-table, it promising fair for such; and may wonder, how I now came to ask leave for that favour; but he must know, that we had never as yet been in company together, save in church, and returning home; then to relieve his surprize he must understand, that we traversed the same ground twice a day, and daily walked slower and slower; nor was I accustomed to repetitions, but recollected where I left off, before I began again; so that with these allowances, he may judge it was to be done.

At the appointed time, I was ushered into the parlour, by a crop-eared aukward fellow, with a blue livery below the calves of his legs for length, and the sleeves hanging over his knuckles, who I soon perceived, was to be our groom of the kettle.

It being the first visit, after so long an acquaintance, I saluted the lady, with all the modest deference imaginable; and she taking me by the hand, led me to a chair by the fire. She was dress'd in a yellow dyed night-gown, a suit of night-clothes, a short apron, and a muslin hood; with a clean pair of unfingered gloves; and had a brace of the largest old fashioned

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rings

rings on, that I ever saw, with here and there large and little patches interspersed on her face, in most judicious arrangement.

We were very gravely pleasant in our conversation, on various subjects, and I learnt more of the lives, manners, dispositions and general characters of the most conspicuous inhabitants of that populous city in one afternoon, from this single intelligencer, than perhaps I might have collected myself, from the individuals, in the personal acquaintance of an age with each; all which, it was my place to grant to be very true: But I must say, I heard not one invective, or ill-natured construction put on any reported behaviour, through the whole narration.

The table being set, the cups were introduced, together with as much bread and butter, in no contemptible slices, as would have sufficed six moderate appetites for breakfast: But the tea being measured in by spoonfuls, our servitor had liked to have committed an horrid *faux pas*; for he had no sooner filled up the tea-pot, than he was about to have placed the black kettle upon the table, by his mistress.

I saw her redden like scarlet, when the poor creature, (who I presume had before

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occasioned the like in her cheeks, upon former unhappy mistakes) moved off with the kettle; but not knowing where to dispose of it, held it in his hand. She gave him another eye; when I expected the fellow would have dropt. Does that water boil? said she. He replied, no; then pray set it where it may, added she; which direction, proved a prodigious comfort to the dejected waiter.

Having filled the cups; carry this to the gentleman, said she. He received it with a trembling hand, and having (in an half bent posture) counted his steps to me, in making a very low bow at delivery, if I had not (by suspecting the issue) prevented it, it had been every drop in my lap.

I sitting at some distance from the table; in order to watch my motions, and re-deliver my dish when I had done; this polite esquire, placed himself just before me, with his breech to his lady. This she highly resenting, called him off to fill the tea-pot, and upon re-assumption of his post; by a semicircular throw of her arm, would have instructed him in better manners; but the poor soul apprehending by it, that he had committed some unpardonable error, and that he was to quit the

room for his offence, took the hint and retired.

Having waited some time, after I had finished my dish, for his return; I arose to convey it to the table myself; but was met half way by the lady; she insisting, and I contradicting, in pretty loud strains; till Sawny (who I presume had been listening to what was going forward) hearing us at high words, re-entered to part us; but the reception his lady gave him, persuaded me, that he had rather much have remained where he before was.

She made her excuse, when the things were removed, for the unpoliteness of her servant; for that indeed, she but seldom put him upon attendance at the tea table; nor had he been long in her service; complaining of the ill convenience people were put to, upon change of servants, before their clothes were worn out; but she had made it her maxim, she said, never to alter her livery for any one, till it had compleated its year, for that if she did, it might be cut to a pincushion before it had done half its duty.

I now fell to work upon my own business, and delivered the expressions of my passion to her, in terms peculiarly new from what I had before been used to. I  
spared



spared abundance of idle protestations, as to her personal charms; but had no inconsiderable difficulty, in reducing her mental ones into a truly worthy order. I dwelt upon the blessing that judgment, and discreet oeconomy introduced into families, where they were regulated by a sense of morality, and divine precepts. I proved to an hair, that reason was only the attribute of the pious; and that the whole world, without religion, would be a most contemptible place. In short, I run on upon the incumbency that there was, on all the human race to marry, those especially, who would suffer no excellency of their nature to lie stifled in inactivity; and demonstrated, what an infinitely superior opportunity, a married person had, of proving a blessing to the world, than those in a single state. And lastly, I professed, how happy I should esteem myself, in the possession of that jewel alone, which all the thinking part of mankind, could not but confessedly admit, to shine in her with brightest lustre: For beauty, and youth only, I assured her, I despised as trifles, too mean to be put in competition with the qualifications that she possessed.

This oration of mine had the desired effect: For I proposed but few things afterwards,

wards, which met with denial. I had after two or three visits, proposed settling about seven hundred pounds a year upon her, before I had ever heard any certainty of her fortune; and expressed my concern for my incapacity of doing it, before I should have been at London, where all my writings were; for that it might be necessary for the lawyer to inspect them, previous to his drawing up the settlement; but told her, that though I had thoughts of deferring it till Spring, yet that now I would soon set out for that city; for that my sollecity could not be compleat, till I had made her my own; the hope of which, would render a winter journey less fatiguing to me.

She wondered, she said, why a lawyer could not make a settlement without seeing my writings! Madam, said I, you will wonder rather, when I tell you, that he can't do it without hearing what your fortune is. So she should truly, she said; but as for that, she could tell him without looking, that it was eight thousand seven hundred pounds; and that very same sum, said I, must be expressed in the writings. Then why can't you tell him where your estate lies? replied she, and let him insert that, without taking such a toil-

a toilsome journey, at this bad season of the year? Madam, added I, (but that I am to a nicety scrupulous in these cases) to be sure, articles drawn between us, for completing such a settlement in future, will be as effectual as the settlement itself, and as compulsory on me to perform it; but I say, I am so tender of offering at any thing, that may but in the least deviate from the vulgar notion of business, that to save my own trouble only, I should not have hinted at that method, had you not urged me to it.

She seemed to think, that articles would do every whit as well; and articles we had accordingly, whereby, in consideration of her fortune, I engaged to settle all my manors, and messuages, lands, farms, grounds, and an hundred other things that the lawyer had jumbled together, in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Essex, Kent, Surry, the city of London, and in the county of Middlesex, to such and such uses; and when that was signed by both of us, and she made as secure as hands could make her; we tied the knot, made a public wedding, and the same day, she put me into possession of all her money and securities.

I was in great hopes, that she had had a round sum of cash by her; but her stock in hand amounted not to above forty pounds: So that I was soon obliged to make an excuse for leaving her, upon pretence of advice received, that one of my Lancashire tenants was going off; and that if I did not go down immediately, I should be a great sufferer.

I took horse therefore as for Lancashire, but in a few miles struck into the London road, raised a thousand pounds upon her securities, and in as little time as I could have been back from Lancashire, returned; highly pleased, that I had not delayed my journey, I told her, a day longer, which might have been of the utmost prejudice to me.

I never in all my life lived in such satisfaction as I did with this woman, for so long together, being almost two years; nor would she ever suffer me to go to London for my writings, being very well content to wait, till there was an absolute occasion for it, and then she herself, she said, would accompany me: So that whiles I, congratulating myself upon so snug a settlement, made the best of husbands to her, she on her part, in return, picqued herself upon being esteemed by me, the most excellent of wives.

These

These our mutual endeavours could not but gain us regard, both at home and abroad; and for the little time we lived together, we were remarkable, even to a proverb, for the strict affection we bore to each other; but in the latter-end of the second year, she was attended with an atrophy, and such lowness of spirits, as baffled the whole practice in physic; and at length, in the twenty-third month of our marriage, carried her off.

I confess, my grief was inexpressible for the loss of her, nor did ever any thing make such a forcible impression upon my heart before. I knew the true worth of her, which I had never known of any other woman, having never been singly engaged to one so long before, without demands from others. Her death left me master of her whole fortune, and effects; which latter, when I had disposed of, I had very little less in hand, than her original fortune.

I stayed about six months longer at Bristol, when finding the place too dull for me, without my wife; I had half a mind to have sent for my Gravesend wife over to me, and have ended my days with her. I had thought it over and over so often, that I had actually wrote her a letter, and



## MEMOIRS of

was just upon the point of dispatching it to her; till considering, that if she should not receive it, with the same temper of mind, and inclination that I wrote it, it would raise a strange combustion in my friend Nave's family, and perhaps create me some very great inconveniency; and then, that if she should prove a shrew, after the good woman whose memory was so dear to me, it might only compel me to further extravagancies; I resolved to postpone all further thoughts of her, and by some means or other return her all the fortune I had had with her; for the dereliction of that, lay very heavy on my mind.

I have before told my reader, that I had gained my last wife by applying myself to church: Now that service, which I had involuntarily engaged in, as to all the proper purposes of appearing there, had so accustomed me to two motions a day that way, that I became uneasy, whenever I omitted them; then my wife, good woman, still holding on the same practice, I could no ways avoid accompanying her thither as a wife, whose power as a mistress, had so long attracted me; and at length, it became so pleasant and agreeable to me, that I could neither desist during her lifetime, or after her decease; till the habit of piety, had in-

roduced the virtue it self, and I was become a new creature, intirely changed in my internal inclination, as well as outward deportment; and had nothing that gave me more concern, than lest, when I should leave the place of my reformation, even that itself should quit me, and I should return to my former libertinism: But my goods being all sold, and my departure fixed, I resolved upon going to London, where having no one but my Gravesend wife to fear, and she, as I expected still at so great a distance, I determined to hold on, and persevere.

I had about two months after my last marriage, hired one of the most trusty fellows living for my footman; and he remaining in my service at my wife's death, I still kept him with me, intending never to part with him (for I did not now think as I used to do, so long as the money lasts) looking upon it, that I had a full sufficiency for my life, and that my care would be, to keep intirely within its income.

Having a brace of cattle of my own, and no exprels demands for being at London in any particular time, I made my stages very easy; intending just to ride through Bath, and then to view Salisbury, and some things there, which I had for a long

time designed to look into; for which reason, I spent near three weeks in this latter place: and here it was, that my Gravesend wife, occurred again to my mind more than ever; for the memory of her, stuck as uneasy to me, as a dry plaister to a green wound: till at last, I resolved to enjoin my own servant secrecy, and send him on my errand.

I computed how much I had received from her, with the interest from the day of our marriage. The principal money I put in one paper, and the interest in another, and making them both into a small bundle, (for it consisted of bank notes, save some small matter of odd money in gold and silver) I directed it to her at Mr. Neve's, at Bodmin, with a strict charge, to my servant upon no account to wait her opening it, or to receive any answer, or message from her, or even to let her know who he came from: And further, that if she had left that place, and he could find her out any where near, he should deliver it to her, if not, return with it to me.

I kept on my usual course of attending the church, daily; and here I went to the cathedral, but was neither benefited, or delighted by the service; So that I sought  
another

another church for my purpose, to which, at proper times, I resorted : But that service happening at a different hour, from what I now frequented, I often went there too; till in a few days time, by close application, I could in good measure join with them; when as my understanding enlarged, I was sensible of such an inward satisfaction from the exercise, and my spirit was so elevated by it, that I could have foregone every other sort of worship, for that, I was in such raptures at it.

At the return of my servant, he bringing the bundle in his hand, I was afraid my journey to London had been stopt; for thinks I, she certainly found me out; and is fixed at London in search of me: but he soon relieved me, by an account of her death, which happened near twelve months before. I received the parcel from him again, telling him, he had done very well, but from my heart, I could not refrain from tears; tho' it was apparent, they were rather caused by the injury I had left unrepaid, than for the loss of the woman herself: for I never pocketted the money as my own again, but distributed it partly at Salisbury, and partly in the other towns I passed through, in prosecution of my journey; nor can I but think, that the

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money

money was more beneficially imployed, than it could have been in any one private hand.

I arrived in town, with more composure, than I had ever before done in my life, having now nothing upon my mind, as a present distress to me, (save the former weight, which I was with all diligence discharging) or the least dread, or apprehension of who should meet me there. I had been necessitated long ago, to give up all thoughts of my Incognita, nor had I the least remaining wish for further intercourse with her; since my resolution was fixt, rather to starve on my own income, than to be beholden to the least criminal act, for any part of my subsistence.

Fanny! poor Fanny! had often a place in my mind; but I profess, not from the least desire of farther converse with her, in a bad way; but meerly, from the hopes of her welfare, and fondness for my children, all of whom, I would, had it been in my power, have amply provided for; however, as it was, I could no ways forget them in my advanced state: So that making enquiry of the stage coachman, if Mrs. Osborn was living at Boston? Upon his information that she was, I delivered him a parcel for her, in which I had inclosed



closed five single hundred pounds bank notes, with a letter.

I therein informed her of some turns in my affairs, which she was before ignorant of; and that having seen my folly in life, I was become a new creature; recommending to her the care of futurity, and the performance of the necessary work of repentance, which it would be too late to set about hereafter; and begging her to let me hear how the children were disposed of, I told her, I had remitted her what I could spare, to assist her and them, by placing them in honest and industrious callings; and without the least amorous expression, I recommended them to the protection of providence, and desired an answer by the coach, which I would call for.

In due time, I received the following letter, which having preserved, I shall transcribe verbatim.

Mr. Osborn,

You can't be sensible of more joy, on the most eminent occasion, than your kind letter gave me. I do assure you, I am as far from my past way of thinking, as it is possible for you to be; nor can you be stricken with stronger compunction than I am.

am. I will say, it is impossible you should : And as I am more and more so, the bounteous hand of providence, (whose daily goodness but the more excites my eagerness for forgiveness) blesses me accordingly.

You can't imagine by this, that I have abandoned all thoughts of the person once so dear to me as yourself ; but be assured I have all criminal ones ; nor will I ever more receive that man to my bed, who claims not the right of an husband there ; to which place, was I worthy to be your wife, you might command entrance : but alas ! I know I am not so, nor will any man regard that woman as such, who has first prostituted her virtue, and honour.

The children, what are left of them, being only four, are all well. Your eldest son is set up a barber, your youngest a shopkeeper, Fanny is married to a drapier, and Molly assists me in the shop, which will be a fine subsistence for her, should I die to morrow.

As to the present you are pleased to make me, I shall divide it into single hundreds, between us all, not knowing which most wants it, we being all so well provided for ; tho' I mention not this, to prevent your future favours ; but to avoid  
any

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any inconvenience it may hereafter prove to yourself, to supply us further.

No one will, at all times, be more glad to see, or hear from you, than  
your humble servant,

F. K.

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C H A P. XX.

*Meets his Incognita at a Play. Waits of  
her Home. Discovers her self. En-  
gages Marriage.*

**I**T was no small pleasure in my then way of thinking, to find that Fanny was so well provided for, and so easy without me, and that my children were occupied in honest employments; and I could plainly perceive with Fanny, that as I advanced in sobriety, justice and moral honesty, so occasions were daily ministred to me, for farther peace and satisfaction of my own mind, till the paths of virtue became so eligible by me, as by no means to be deviated from, let the necessity be what it would; for my inward satisfaction, at having postponed, or rejected a bad motion, or action, was not to be ballanced, by the  
actual

actual fruition of it; and my whole deportment consisting of one uniform course of behaviour, regulated by reason, and religion, my nights were calm and composed, and my days judiciously spent, in acting up to the dictates of knowledge, and conscience.

I perceived not the least necessity for restraining myself from publick diversions; for the inclination that accompanied me thither, was a sure guard, against the most contagious malignity that could assault me, at such places. I viewed both faces and things, in a far different light from what I had done, and my eyes would melt in pity, but for imaginary scenes of distress. In short, all was so quiet within, and the comfort of that delectable composure so bewitching, that I would not have caused the least ruffle to it, for the world: Nay, I had so sorrowed for my past indiscretions, that even the weight of them was abundantly diminished; nor did the most pleasing of them ever return to my fancy, unaccompanied with its attendant horror. O! would I say, to myself, could I but have been sensible heretofore, of the true fountain of content; I had never swallowed even a sip of the world's pestiferous potions! How blessed am I, to have had my

my being extended for this beneficial purpose! I might have fallen in the height of my intemperances, then, what had become of me! And these reflections, seldom failing of sinking me to my Knees, I never arose from thence, dissatisfied.

About five months after I came to town, I very gravely walked to the theatre in Drury-lane, to the tragedy of the Distrest Mother. My ambition led me no higher than the pit; and being one of the first there, I had taken my seat in the upper row, with my back to the boxes; and as I might then truly say with the philosopher, that I was never less alone, than by myself; I had entred into very grateful reveries, till after the third musick. The company then flocking in apace, it was a very full house; but what had heretofore ingrossed my whole attention, (the prodigious circle of fair behind me) had no attraction in it now: the performance was what I came to regale at, and thereon center'd all my thoughts.

The play begun, I almost forgot where I was; my spirit moved with the actors, and the rival passions of hate, love, joy, fear, and pity, by turns, so occasionally possessed me, that far from imagining myself present at some scene of intrigue, or debauchery,



debauchery, which had heretofore been my contemplations, in that place; I cannot say, my heart was ever moved to a more commendable pitch of excellence before, and plainly demonstrated to me, that not what a man sees, or hears, is the occasion of vice, in him, but the temper with which he hears, or sees it.

The play ended, instead of devouring the face of the fair with my eye; scrutinizing each feature and lineament; and from thence indulging every motion of a libidinous appetite; (the common attendant of such exhibitions,) as had been my former practice: I cast up but a farewell eye towards them, in pity for the excess of vanity I behold there; and mentally repeated to myself, what would those gaudy creatures give, for a moment of my peace! but alas! they feel it not! their souls, as their bodies, are wrapt up in trifles, empty bubbles! I was turning from them to quit the house; when a lady just over my head, stooping forward; Mr. Osborn, said she, how long have you been in this part of the world? I should scarce have look'd so low for you, but that you was so very near me.

At another time, I should have suspected myself to have been trapt, perhaps,  
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had a stranger of that sex made so free with my name, and have expected no good issue from it: but those fears were over, and I gravely replied, madam, I beg your pardon, but fear you are mistaken, for I cannot at present recollect you. What? replied she, can your memory fail you after a little absence? can that have obliterated all knowledge of me? I started at the voice; 'tis my Incognita, said I, 'tis surely she: I must quit the box, said she, are you for stepping round? I reply'd, that I would wait on her immediately.

I quitted the pit with some precipitation, and even my past flame for my Incognita began to revive in me; when checking myself; hold, hold, said I, let me deliberate, I have engaged in a new course. What? was it because I lacked opportunity only! and are all my resolutions to subsist, but till the next temptation! where is the tranquillity I so much boasted of! is it to be despised, abandon'd, as unworthy of me! and is the deluge of horror I had disgorged, to take place in my mind again! no, I'll fly the house, leave her (tho' it were my Incognita) to her own reflections, and let her know, that I am proof against her wiles: But common gratitude, for such expressive favours, for my  
very

very being, and the support of many years, (should it prove her) claims competent regard from me : I ought not thus abruptly to desert her : Nay, possibly my example may prevail with her, for a retraction of her former vices, and henceforth, of enamoured lovers, we may become real helpful friends, and confirm each other's principles, by our united resolutions. I am resolved to meet her, and to prevail, or never see her more.

I was by this time at the door of her box, and presenting her my hand, conducted her to her chariot ; uncertain yet, (but by her voice, and often diffident of that) whether it was my Incognita or not ; for tho' I had at times taken many persons for her, yet I could not recollect, ever to have seen this lady before. At the chariot door, I made my bow for taking leave, wishing her safe home. Nay, said she, the only way to be sure of that, is to accompany me. What will be the event of this ! thinks I. Can I refuse ! I was in twenty minds ; but having no leisure for deliberation, I stepped in.

Had I been sure of its being my Incognita, I could have begun some discourse immediately, by way of entertainment, to myself and her ; but the fear of its not being her, and the dread I had conceived of  
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its being any other, (tho' no other modest woman thinks I, would have taken the liberty she might justly claim with me) almost distracted me. I was not to learn, that she received no small satisfaction from my confusion, but how, amidst the multitude of my reflections, to enter upon any method of speaking it, I was as deficient as a child; till, how did you like Mrs. Oldfield to night? said the lady. I replied, extremely well. She was made for the part of Andromache, and the part for her. If the part was made for her, said she, herself must on course be made for that. Pardon me, madam, replied I, I am not fond of opposing my sentiments to the ladies; but had that been made for Mrs. Cox, could you have imagined her made for that? Why not? said she. Because, added I, the display of majesty is inexpressible, but in perfect stature and proportion. She beg'd pardon, she said, she was convinced; for we women, added she, have nothing to do in life that I see; but to submit to the better judgment of the men; we really have not half their reason. Pardon me, madam, replied I, why is reason distributed to us? but to distinguish between right and wrong. Then the lady who is capable of justly forming that distinction,

distinction, on hearing both sides, is that reasonable being, you have just called man. She told me, that my argument, however true, was but a further confirmation of her opinion.

The chariot had now stopt, and I receiving her from it, led her into the house; when she begged me to walk into the parlour, till she had given some necessary orders to her servants. I obeyed; and charmingly furnished it was; but those allurements took not my fancy, their effect was lost on me; for I was proof against all female artifice, and was collecting my determination for remaining so, when the lady following me, desired that I would sit down. Some wine entered immediately, of which we each drank a glass, and upon the servant's retreat, I was rising to be gone; when, Mr. Osborn, said she, how long hath your mother been dead? This question puzzled me, to conceive the meaning of it, and brought me to my chair again; where having a while recounted the past stages of my life; I told her, I thought that it was twenty-six years since: But pray Madam, said I, did you know her? Before I even knew myself, replied she. I begged then the favour of her name, she replied, D—n—t. I said I  
had



had forgotten it, or had never heard my mother mention it.

We ran on from this, to other discourse, and in short, were so fairly in for it, that before I had again offered at my departure, a servant appeared with a summons for supper; so that to avoid rudeness, I was compelled to accept her invitation to that repast.

Her behaviour was so polite, discreet, modest, and agreeable, that I could not harbour the least suspicion of ill design in her; and her age being so nearly correspondent to my own, (which in my apprehension would be a guard against any indecorum) I made the less scruple of following her up stairs, to which we were guided by the servant, with candles before us; but no sooner had I entered on the stair-case, than I was very certain of my old haunt. So, thinks I, this is some new conductress, (the other being worn out in the service) who I suppose is to introduce me to the shadow of my Incognita again: But upon entering the dining-room, all was open, no curtain, the table standing in its old place, and every thing relating to the furniture, exactly the same as when I saw it last. What new vagary now? thinks I: but I'll eat my supper,

per, and begon without, ensnaring myself in doubts, at present of no service to me.

We were attended at supper by three fellows in livery, and carried on our discourse together as familiarly, as two of the oldest friends in Christendom; but when some things gave me a doubt of who she was, yet others confirmed me, that she must be none other than my Incognita herself; for so many of her peculiar phrases occurred, that I judged it impossible for me to be mistaken.

After supper, she perceiving me to cast a piercing eye towards every part of the room, and especially on such things as had stood on the same side of the curtain, that I always sat off; Sir, said she, you seem to have some knowledge of this house. Or I am much deceived, I have, Madam, said I. Pray, said she, who might live in it then? Madam, replied I, you have puzzled me; but sure I am, I have seen every thing in this part of the room, but one, before. And which of all the furniture is that? The only ornament of all, I told her. I shall value it the more for your esteem, I can assure you, Sir, said she; but pray, point it out to me. Withdraw yourself, said I, Madam, and it vanishes.

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O Sir, replied she, I could not have thought Mr. Osborn had been such a thoroughly paced master of flattery.

Madam, said I, had I urged this five and twenty years ago, to some persons, they might have esteemed it so, and have suspected me; but I am too serious for that sport now. I think it beneath the dignity of my nature as a Man, to falsify my heart by my tongue. I view things now as they really appear, stript of those false glosses, my younger age would shadow over a base inside with; and now I am, and shall, I hope, for ever remain, to be only the man I profess myself. It is as rare a thing, said she, Mr. Osborn, to hear a man of your age talking of years, as to meet with one of the true character you would assume to yourself. I replied, that I had drank deep of vanity with the rest of the world, but the draught was grown nauseous to me; having for some years discovered, sedateness, and sobriety to be so palatable. I am very glad, added she, that I am not the only person in life, of that old fashioned way of thinking, that you speak of; for though I may have been affected with the gaieties of life; yet am I now fully apprized, that sound sense and a reasonable conduct, are essentially necessary, to our

enjoyment of that satisfaction, so truly relishable by the soul of man.

I became so charmed with her conversation, that lest it should be adapted only to the mode of thinking, I had expressed myself in, as a surer means of ensnaring me, and to put me off my guard; I grew very uneasy to be gone; but more so, without the previous satisfaction of having perfectly discovered who she was. This, thinks I, may perhaps be the last time that ever I shall see her; and should she be affronted, it matters but little to me; I'll put her to the question, right or wrong; then plucking up my courage, I asked her, whether she was the lady of this house, five or six and twenty years before?

She blushed, and hesitating a little, demanded my reason for that query? jocosely adding, that she feared it would be entering too far into the mystery of her own age; which was a thing few ladies were over fond of revealing. I begged pardon, if I had proposed amiss, and desired it might be dropt; when she frankly assured me, she was. And was this your constant residence? said I. I profess Mr. Osborn, said she, you are now come to the true spirit of your catechism; but it is no more than I expected, when you began with what is your

your name. Perceiving her to laugh heartily, and be so merrily disposed, I desired that my question, if no offence to her, might be answered. As I can refuse you but one request in life, said she, I answer you truly, that this was my constant residence, till your influence, at times, drove me from it.

I could now no longer doubt who was my companion, and with the profoundest respect, rising, I saluted her; she receiving me very modestly, with blushes on her cheeks; when I asked her, what could occasion her depriving of me till now, of the prospect of beholding her, and why she made no scruple of it now.

She replied, that she had been informed by the old lady who first introduced me to her, that I had been apprized of the slavish condition, annexed by her uncle, to her fortune, of not marrying, till she was of the age of forty five years; upon forfeiture of the whole to a charity. You may imagine, added she, the disagreeableness of that proviso. I presume, I need not palliate any thing before you; my inclination I own tended to the breach of my shackles; nor could I conceive a better way of evading my uncle's injunction, than by making choice of that person for my companion,



whom of all others, had I been free, I should have coveted for my husband; and to whom, I had determined at all events, to prove constant, as his lawful spouse. This I think, arising from my own choice, I have performed to a nicety, till now the course of time is elapsed.

Here she stopping, I begged her to proceed; for that she was not yet arrived to that part of her story, which alone could inspire me with delight. Sir, answered she, I profess, I have not declared the least syllable, but truth. O proceed, proceed, said I, or I am undone. What is it you can mean? said she. O Madam, answered I, now the course of time you say is elapsed; O now, rejoin that you are unrestrainedly desirous of making me, that happy husband you could once have chosen, or you will leave my mind involved in more distress and misery, than your first bounty relieved me from. I understand you now, said she; but as it seemed most proper for that motion to proceed from your self, I shall make the reply that hath ever been reserved for that demand; Sir, I am yours.

I arose, and embracing her again and again; What said I, and shall I at last live happy, in the lawful enjoyment of the most respectable part of the creation? O! It

is too much transport for me, o're-press'd with an ill-spent life, and faulty conscience, to be rewarded with. I ought rather, to have purged out my crimes by an age of wretchedness, and despair, than for the labour of a few months only, to reap the fruits of my repentance, in such a pleasurable harvest; but I receive from hence, the stronger confirmation of what I have hoped, and doubted not; that the prodigal son cannot return to his father, before he is both ready to receive, and reward him.

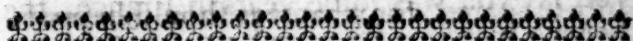
No sooner had our raptures taken flight, but we returned to sedateness again; when, said she, I am apprized, Mr. Osborn, that you have been a large dealer in the lady's favours, I have one more question to ask you on that head; Have you a wife now living? I ran back the list of them in my own mind, very attentively; and then replied, No. Count them again, and again, said she, be sure; let us have no false step at last. I did so, and again replied, No; not that can claim me, by any lawful title. Pray, said she, make me a judge of that title you call unlawful; for I shall insist upon not being your unlawful wife.

I fairly declared to her my marriage at Gravesend, my voyage to France, and second marriage at Paris; which latter, said I, is absolutely void. She allowed it might be so: But what, said she, is become of the Gravesend lady, was not she dead before your marriage at Paris? for if so, as you say you was some years in France, the French match is still binding. I then declared to her, the death of my Gravesend wife, and when, and by what means I gained the knowledge of it; and also what stratagem I had used, to impose upon my Parisian lady, a belief of my death, and the effect it had had: so that I assured her, I was now at lawful christian liberty, to engage with whom I would; but as she had so long devoted herself to him, whose sole ambition was to yield her all future happiness, I should wait the arrival of that day, with the profoundest gratitude and impatience.

She thought, she said, that we had now gone through business enough for that night; but if a part of my ensuing evening could be spared, from more urgent business, she should then be glad to see me. She speaking this with so sweet an accent, I entreated her, that if it could not, she would excuse me.

Then

Then assuring her, that I looked upon the present, as the most felicitous day I had as yet ever seen, or had even ever hoped to see, I saluted her; when she telling me, that her coach waited for me at the door, I left her.



C H A P. XXI.

*Preparations for the wedding. Osborn finds himself heir to his uncle. Discourse on that head.*

SUCH a scene as the past, would some few years before, have so fired my blood, that I should neither have slept or eaten, till I had been with her again; but it had a much more manly effect now; for I no sooner was settled in my chamber, than having considered what a vast fortune I was falling into, I began to search about, from whence it should issue, to so undeserving a creature as myself; and could at last resolve it only into the original cause of all things, which naturally led me on to expressions of gratefulness; an acknowledgment of my dependance; resolutions of future deserving; and praises for

so much unmerited goodness; all which (as absent from the body) I discharged, by intellectual eloquence only, till my spirits reverting back to their abandoned habitation, I arose from the posture I was in, and slept coolly till next morning; when repeating the last night's exercise, I was fully prepared, for whatever should happen, of good or bad, right or wrong, for the ensuing day: For I had really discharged all uncommon anxiety for future events, striving only to act with circumspection, and integrity, in whatever occurrences should befall me.

I drest as usual; but in every thing very plain; for I had made no use of finery since my marriage at Bristol; and dining at an eating house for a shilling, I walked towards evening to Mrs. D—n—ts; when unluckily (as I thought) a coach stopt at the door. I expected to have met with a room full of company, and that the design of my visit would have been frustrated, being just upon the poise, whether I had not better return, and come again the next day; but fearing it might be taken for a neglect, if I left not, at least, my name with the servant, I kept on, and was opening my lips to speak, when I heard the servant deliver to the coach, that his lady was not



not at home; this put me upon recovering from the stand I was making, and I walked forward to the end of the street; imagining, that possibly her expectation of me, might have occasioned her absence from home as to other visitors.

By this time, the coach being out of sight, I returned, and found the servant who had seen me pass by the door, waiting for me. He immediately ushered me in, and the complement at our first meeting being a salute, I presently recovered a gross omission I had been guilty of the preceding day, in not enquiring after the children; when that good creature assured me, that she expected nothing less than a thought of them, when she (with delight) perceived what ecstacy, the discovery of herself, and her inclinations, had put me into: Neither had I myself, said she, from the moment I was satisfied that you might be lawfully mine, the least thought concerning them: But now we are both under less necessity of surprize, I have only to assure you, that they are all well; that I am their aunt, and fix such charming figures they make in life, as are scarce to be paralleled upon the globe: But enough of them, as it will not be long e'er you see them.

My conception of these dear babies (for so I must call them; though they were all grown men and women) was exceedingly heightened from this report; and I longed for the short time she hinted at to be elapsed, that I might doat upon them with paternal fondness; but feared it would not happen till our marriage was consummated; and that must be left to the lady's own appointment.

At repeating some of our former discourse, I made it my humble request, that she would fix a day for our nuptials. She replied, that we both had something to be previously engaged in; for that as she purposed a publick wedding; we must be prepared to appear in the manner our rank would require; and therefore, so little time, as my prudence would direct me to limit for that purpose, she would consent to.

This put a stop to my further importunity, till I had re-considered the proposal; nor could I for my life fix it at less than a fortnight, though we should be almost night and day at the employment; for what with buying, measuring, fitting, and recollecting what had been at first forgotten, (as at least one fourth of what we should want would be) I could not rate my com-  
I pu-

putation at a day less, and told her so: But she returned, very smartly, I wonder you should mistake so, Mr. Osborn; why it will take that time to paint and dry a new coach. I will rather walk on foot all the days of my life, said I, than defer it a moment on that account, by my own choice. Come, come, said she, make no rash resolutions, let it be as you say, mine brushed up, with both our arms upon it, will serve till the new one is ready.

Here she struck me dumb as a fish, which she would not have done, had she recollected all that she knew; for I had no arms, that I had any pretence to make use of. This she observing, presently guessed the meaning. You seem a little confounded, said she, at something: If you can't recollect your arms, it is but going to the Herald's Office, where for a trifle, you may have the Osborn arms blazoned properly, as they ought to be. This brought my Check again to temper, and I acquiesced in that method.

Well, the day being appointed, the poor horses and servants had never in their lives undergone such a fatigue before; for either with us singly, or together, they were upon the hoof from morning till night, for some of the first days: but when  
we

we came to look over the loads of things which we had heaped together, of linens, woollens, and silks of all sorts, sizes, and denominations; instead of fourteen days, one would have imagined twice as many weeks, to have been but a moderate allotment of time, for perfecting what we required to be done with them; but though these things seemed so bulky, one afternoon swept them all away, not a thread remaining; and in two days more, their place was supplied with such an inundation of cambrick, lace, fans, ribbons, gloves, &c. &c. &c. that a by-stander would have imagined, I had been a merchant, freighting a vessel to the West-Indies.

In this, and this like exercise, our time stole away, till the Monday before the fourteenth day, which was on the thursday following; when reading one of the papers of the day at the Coffee-house, after dinner; I was struck with a paragraph, as near as I can remember, to the following purpose. On Friday last, died of a lingering illness, at his seat at C—r—n, the right honourable the Earl of A—e; his lordship having no male heir, the title is extinct. He hath left the bulk of that family estate, to Charles Osborn Esq; natural

ral son of his elder brother deceased, which gentleman is supposed to be now abroad, on his travels.

Such a notice as this, received some years before, would have made me mad; but I read it over again, with all the composure imaginable, and drinking my dish of coffee, my sole reflection was on the works of providence: How happy it was for me, that this noble estate had not fallen into my hands, till I was of capacity to enjoy it in perfection. I paused a little upon it, and sending the boy to buy me a duplicate of that paper, carried it with me to Mrs. D---n---t's,

At tea-time, I pulled out my paper, telling her, I had brought it for the amusement of her tea-table; then you must read it, said she. It will be but dry exercise to me, said I, who have seen it already. Then make you the tea, said she, and I'll peruse it to myself. I undertook the job very readily, under some of her previous directions, and to it we went, I to my tea making, and she to her news paper. I cast my eye upwards every now and then, to see how she went on; but had not long watched her, before her colour came, and went, and came again; then stopping short, and looking me full in the face,



face, (in quite a different tone than she had used to speak) Sir, said she, pray have you read this paper? I gravely replied, that I had. And are no more moved at it? said she. I presume by your gravity upon the occasion, this paper was put into my hand, instead of a declaration of your own, to signify that you have no further occasion for me. The water then bubbling in her eyes, had almost split my heart asunder; when I replied, No, my love, you much mistake me. I hoped, that possibly I might thereby have made you joyous; but for myself, having such near expectations, of what is of infinitely more consequence to me, than that estate, and wherein I have centred my whole sense of bliss, every other occurrence in life meets me with the more indifference. And is that all? Do you speak the truth from your heart? said she. I do from my soul, returned I; nor have I a pleasing expectation from the fruition of it, that is not conjoined to your happiness. Then rushing into tears, she arose from her chair, and I meeting her half way, we fell on each other's neck in such silent transport, as was far more expressive, than whatever could have been uttered by the mouth of the most eloquent orator.

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We remained in this posture, till our first emotions subsiding, we parted by consent, and retired to our former seats; when each having dried our faces: It is pity he could not have bequeathed you the honour with the estate, said she. Madam, said I, while you are mine, nothing can move me. I build not upon this estate, it is the news of the day, and may be true or false; but as for the honour, I despise it, any other ways, than as it would have given you a title, and my future children may prize it. ~~No~~, I'll assure you, both title and estate, hold rank in my esteem, in infinite subordination to your person; put me but once in possession of that, I may then find leisure for the consideration of lesser matters; but till then, I can have no relish for any thing.

I thought but little more of this paper account; but Mrs. D—n—t would not suffer it to rest here. She wondered, she said, that I should seem so unconcerned; that for her part, though she had a sufficiency for us both to live genteelly, yet our children might be glad of so fine an acquisition; and truly, it was not to be lightly thought of, even by ourselves. Thus, from one thing to another, she obtained my consent, for sending her servant to my  
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Lord's house in town, to get a certainty of it.

She had a very artful fellow in her retinue, who understood his business to an hair; and he, in about an hour's time, brought us a confirmation of our paper intelligence; with these further circumstances, that his Lordship's will was in his steward's hands, who arrived in town late on Sunday night, and was in search after Mr. Osborn; but that all the account they could yet gain was, that he was beyond sea.

Being now fully satisfied of my uncle's death, and that something might be left me in his will (though I much queried as to all his estate) I told Mrs. D—n—t, that as I had once lost this estate already, for a small delay in searching for my father's will, I judged it would be highly imprudent in me, to let the steward keep my uncle's, till some other claimant should arise, to dispossess me of this too: so I desired, that I might order back her servant, with notice where I was, for the steward to wait on me, when he should return, if she would permit me to receive him in her house; she thought it very proper, she said, and surely, as I was so near master of it, I might command her house without apology.

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At the fellow's return, he introduced the steward. He was the very same who had lived with my father, and I remembered his face the moment I saw him; when taking him by the hand, I called him by his name, and asked if he did not recollect me? but he could not say that he did; till after some discourse of past affairs, when I was a child at his Lordship's, he looking at, and scanning over my face, was at length persuaded, that I was once his young master; then pulling out my uncle's will, he gave it me to peruse.

I read it first to myself; and therein found the whole estate my own, even the furniture of his houses, both in town, and country, with all his plate, jewels, and ready money, save about five thousand pounds, which he had given in legacies; and he had constituted me his sole executor.

I told him, I was perfectly satisfied with what his lordship had done; ordered him to leave the will with me, and made him a present of twenty guineas which I had in my pocket, for his care of it; assuring him, that should not be all I would do for him and his family; then giving orders about the servants, and for the immediate

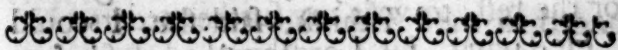
diate requisites for the funeral; I told him, for the rest, to wait my further orders.

He saying, his Lordship had desired to be interred at C—r—n, I gave him a general commission for the funeral preparations, with assurance, that I would myself be down with him, by that day sev'nnight.

I then gave Mrs. D—n—t the will to read, which having finished, Mr. Osborn, said she, we have all our work to begin again; here is the whole family to be put in mourning. My dear, said I, let that be no delay to us; we shall not want it till after the funeral. I must still insist on Thursday to make us one, as I purpose, with your leave, to set out from the church for C—r—n. We will go in one of my uncle's coaches, while our own is covering for our return, and let some of the servants bring our mourning after us. She agreed, that I had contrived it very well, and we acted accordingly.







C H A P. XXII.

*Marries. Enters on his estate, and makes full restitution. Adventures with his French wife.*

I Did not see Mrs. D—n—t till the next evening, having had much business on my hands; when she informed me, that all the family servants, and tradesmen had been at her house, to receive my orders, and to hope for my commands; and in short, says she, my house has been little emptier than an inn at a fair, all day. I in my turn also acquainted her, that I had proved the will, and produced to her our licence.

No sooner were we married on Thursday, than we set out for C—r—n, lay at St. Albans that night, and by easy stages reached C—r—n, about noon on Sunday; when having dined, we took a view of the park, and gardens; but my wife, who had never before seen them, was quite in raptures at the beauty they abounded with. How long, my dear, said I, has this poor man

man my uncle enjoyed, what of right belonged to me? I think, said she, I could have submitted to bread and water, before I could have done such an act, would it have made me a queen; he must have been a base man.

My dear, said I, it hath been often in my thoughts, whether every thing hath not happened for the best. As how? said she. Can it be better for a man to be cheated, than to enjoy his own? Not absolutely, said I; but yet, you are not unsensible, what a gay and ungovernable disposition I have been of: Now suppose, this estate had come regularly to me, as it ought to have done; I might not now have been master of it; and most undoubtedly should not have enjoyed you with it; but why might you not have had that now? said she. I told her, that I feared, my extravagancies would have made away with it? but now, said I, my very children may have hopes of it.

We argued this matter over pro and con a good while, till upon all accounts, we both agreed, that it was much better as it had happened, than any forecast of ours could have ordered it; and the next day, we took an inventory of the plate, amounting to several thousand ounces, of the fine  
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pictures, jewels, and other valuable curiosities, and locked up such things as ought not to be in common.

There was a vast quantity of money, and securities; which I may almost say, we had little or no occasion for; abundance of cattle, and deer, and in short, nothing, but what was stocked, even to profusion; and to wind up all, the steward delivered in his rent-roll; of above thirty three thousand pounds a year; for my uncle's own estate, was now added to my father's.

I made a very splendid funeral for my uncle, and ordered a monument for my father; but was deprived of one piece of beneficence, that I would gladly have paid to the family of my deceased mother, by not being able to discover any of them living; so that having fully answered the purpose of my journey to C—r—n, and confirmed each servant in their respective posts, we returned again.

No sooner were we settled in my late uncle's house, but two whole months passed, in receiving, and paying complimentary visits; nor was it double the time, that would leave me so intirely free, as I could have wished to have been. Upon the first recess that I could gain, I returned

five thousand pounds to Fanny and her children, informing her of my marriage, and that she must not expect any thing further from me. I had before remitted to Paris, to my wife there, all the portion I had received with her, and interest for it; and having some few years before discovered, who it was that I had robbed in Carnock wood; I secretly conveyed to her, who was then a merchant's widow at Hackney, all her principal and interest; and wherever else I had done a wrong, I either returned it to the injured parties, or their representatives. I also sent five hundred pounds to my Cheshire widow, and when that work was all over, I set about regulating the œconomy of my own family. I prevailed with my wife to bring all the children home, as her nephews and nieces; nor ever lived any man upon earth more to his ease, and satisfaction than myself.

During this tranquillity it was, that one night, at court, I met my French lady, entering the antichamber, as I was returning from my wife and daughter, whom I had just left in the drawing-room. I was finer dressed than ordinary on the occasion; but Madam no sooner perceived me meeting her, than she started, and I feared  
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would have fallen into a fit, having the very same gentleman with her, that I had seen in her company, upon her landing at Bristol : As I could by no means avoid her, but by direct running away, I made a stand, and welcomed her to England, in French. She was under such confusion, that she could make no reply ; and the young gentleman, seemed as much amazed as she ; till perceiving I should rather increase her terrour, than abate her apprehensions by my stay, I was moving off ; when the gentleman following me, begged that I would inform him, what had occasioned such a consternation in his wife. I had persevered in my sincerity for a long time ; but thought, that if ever a lye could be necessary, it would be now ; and that for the future peace of two families, it might be very excusable ; especially, as she could no ways be my wife, for reasons I have before given : So I readily told my spark, that I had been her confessor abroad, and had just before my departure for England, enjoined her a penance, which by her dread of me, I was afraid she had not performed ; and for that reason, till I should give her some comfort, I doubted much of her recovery ; but said I, walk you at a distance, whilst I lead her into

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the next room, and you shall see all will be well again presently.

I then advanced to her, and taking her by the hand, she was about to shriek out, had I not prevented it, by assuring her, I was a friend, and only waited to give her a piece of advice, to prevent my being alive from coming to the ears of her husband. O! said she, has he told you that we are married? He has, said I, but he knows not who I am, nor ever shall, keep you but your own counsel. As to your fortune, I hope you received it; we did indeed, receive a sum of money, replied she, much more than what you had with me; and that being so unexpected an acquett, we purposed to spend part of it upon our pleasures, which occasions our appearing here; for we knew not who it came from. I told her, that the overplus, was the interest of her money, according to the rate it bore in this country, to which she was heartily welcome. She replied, that indeed, if she had not heard of my death, she should have had no thoughts of marrying again; but I revived her spirits, when I assured her, by what means she had obtained her intelligence; and that expecting her enquiry was in order, either to prosecute, or prevent a marriage with that gentleman,

I conjectured, that the report of my decease would not be ungrateful to her; especially, as my affairs were then so circumstanced, that I could by no means have cohabited with her.

She brightned up exceedingly at the news, and especially after I had told her, all that had passed between her husband and me; and promised to persist in the same story to him. So now, having brought her to my cue, I re-delivered her to her husband, and they proceeded to the drawing-room.

Though I was going to Whites, I could not help returning first to my wife, for the sake of shewing her my French lady; nor was it long, before I had singled her out, and left them almost elbow to elbow.

My wife was surprized, she told me, at coming home, how I could venture to face the French Madam; till I unravelled the whole story to her. O Charles, said she, you have long been a deceiver of poor women, but now you are at the men too: So, you satisfied the lady's scruples of conscience, and gave the poor husband a quieting dose into the bargain; but I wonder how you escaped without a fee for both these cures. You see now, said she, it is your strict honesty, that even brought her over

to you: And it was worth double the money, replied I, on account of the peace it has administred to my mind, which I could not have attained, but by that means. My dear, said she, it is very true; I only thought to have rallied you, but perceive, its force returns upon myself; for it is amazing, that contrary to your expectation, that act of justice of yours, should have redounded so much to your future quiet.

Such, my dear, said I, are for the most part the methods of Providence; to bring both unexpected things to pass; and that by means too, equally unpromising, where the intention in the first act, is but purely, and simply just; and I am persuaded, that it is the want of this only, which prevents success in those, which do not answer my prescribed rule: At least, it has seldom failed in me, as I could demonstrate, were it necessary, in many instances.

Upon the introduction of my children to me, it was with the greatest difficulty in the world, that I could restrain nature, from exerting the whole force of its paternal tenderness; and though, at their years, it would have been an unseemly thing, to have published their bastardy, even to themselves; yet the check that secret put upon

upon my inclination, obliged me to retire, the moment after I had complimented, and embraced them all; as my nephews and nieces by marriage; when my study only was witness, to the abundance of my joy upon the happy occasion; for my heart was so full, that had not my passion vented itself in a deluge of tears, it must have obstructed the functions, both of my animal, and vital spirits.

My wife, in due time, brought me another son; though I own, that I had ever since my marriage with her, been in great hopes that we should have had no more children, or at least, only daughters; for my eldest son Charles was so fine a gentleman, not only in external comeliness, but adorned with such graces of mind, and every natural and acquired endowment; that it was a severe stroke to me, but to imagine that he should not be the inheritor of my estate; and yet, that was now become impracticable: For thinks I, this youngest son being legitimate, must of course be heir to all; and in him, must my family be preserved. Nay, it would be a barbarous act in me, to casture him without cause; for he may also be very deserving of the estate; then, what regard can he have for my future memory, should

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I but make him equal with my natural children. On the other hand, said I, my first children expect nothing from me, and consequently, whatever I shall do for them, appearing to be a matter of bounty, they will be thankful for.

These cogitations, employed many both of my wife's and my own wakeful hours; and I had thoughts of attempting to get them legitimated by act of parliament; but my wife opposed that so strenuously, that I dropt the design intirely, and fell upon another scheme, that she had hinted to me; that was, as her fortune, by this time, consisted of an hundred and fifty thousand pounds, we should settle it all on our first children; that is, on Charles fifty, and twenty thousand pounds on each of the other five: that, she said, would be sufficient to marry the girls handsomely, and the boys, with some additional posts that my interest might procure them, might then be well provided for.

I gave close attention to all that she said, and told her, that her proposal was extremely agreeable to me, in every respect, save that of Charles, on whom I could no ways agree to settle so small a pittance, from so large an estate as mine was; and that though I could wish to do better  
 Charles for



for him, yet that I was resolved, at least, to settle my late uncle's original estate upon him, and till that was over, I should not think that I had done him distributive justice.

It was not long, before Charles seeming to have an inclination for a marriage, (of which I had private intimation) between him and the lady Ann G—r—d, who was very intimate with my daughters, from having been their school-fellow: To prevent any clandestine engagement between them, I took Charles under examination, putting it very close to him, whether there was not some latent amour carrying on with that lady? He assured me, that he esteemed her very highly; but as he could have no thoughts of marriage with her, but by consent of his aunt and me, and also of the young lady's friends; whatever might be his real desires, he was very far from expecting an accomplishment of them.

I commended his prudence, in not committing a precipitate act, which might be highly prejudicial to them both; and assured him, that if he was apprized of the lady's inclination to the match, I would not say, but that such a thing might be brought about, without much difficulty, with the mutual good liking of all parties.

Charles

Charles replied, that he believed he might answer for the lady, with as much certainty as for himself, by reason of the many opportunities he had had, of fathoming her regard for him; and was certain, that would prove no obstacle to his utmost wishes, for she would soon consent to remove it.

Having gained this intelligence, I applied to her father, who upon my assurance of settling two thousand a year on his daughter in jointure, agreed to give her fifteen thousand pounds; so that but few weeks past, before I had married them, and settled as I had proposed on Charles. I also gave them a seat I had in Shropshire, which I had never as yet seen, though it had cost me several hundreds in the support of it.

The next year, my wife brought me a daughter, which was the last child we had; and in about three years more, I disposed of all my natural children; the daughters were married into high life, one of my sons in the army, and the other in a post of very handsome income under the government; so that I had now no family about me, that I was ashamed to call my own.

My youngest son and heir, at my writing the latter part of this account, is turned  
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of fifteen; and my self and wife, (though healthy) without the hopes of many more years passing over us, are in daily expectation of the great call of nature, whose approach, will give me little concern; I having, for many years, resolutely persisted in the pursuit of such measures only, as may assure me of a peaceable exit, and render me acceptable in that region of spirits, to which I wait my translation.

I shall now conclude my labours with this reflection, which no man living, I believe, can from better experience assert than myself; that whatsoever pleasurable prospect, a course of vice and immorality may promise to the deluded prosecutor of it; he may, nay must expect, in one shape or other, to find himself miserably deceived, and perplexed by it; and on the contrary, that nothing but a well spent life, can lay a foundation for peace here, and glorious expectations hereafter.

F I N I S.